CHARLESTON IS A CITY meant for meandering. Poised on a peninsula surrounded by salt marshes, rivers, barrier islands and Charleston Harbor, it has a sprawling natural landscape rife with unique flora and fauna. The 350-year-old city has stories to spare, told through its commitment to art, architecture and multicultural cuisine (from traditional Gullah and Lowcountry soul food, French- and Asian-infused fine dining, fresh-off-the-boat seafood, barbecue and beyond). The Holy City's residents are perhaps its best storytellers, though, warmly welcoming visitors and inviting them to slow down and take it all in.
CHARLESTON

GIRLS' GETAWAY

WHERE TO STAY > The Dewberry
In 2016, developer John Dewberry renovated this circa 1964 federal building, turning it into a hip midcentury-modern hotel. Enjoy the lavish spa, brasserie and complimentary bicycles for exploring downtown. thedewberrycharleston.com

MORNING > Callie's Hot Little Biscuit
It's hard to say what's more of a Southern staple at Callie's: the seven varieties of fresh-made biscuits or the grits. Order the grits in a biscuit bowl and you won't have to choose—just don't forget to add pimento cheese and roasted tomatoes. calliesbiscuits.com

HISTORY BUFF

WHERE TO STAY > 1837 Bed & Breakfast
This meticulously preserved three-story Federal-style home (and its charming carriage house) features canopy rice beds, piazzas and claw-foot tubs. If only the original brick walls could talk. 1837bedandbreakfast.com

MORNING > Historic District
Take a carriage tour or wander by foot, visiting the Old Slave Mart Museum, the South Carolina Historical Society and the ornate downtown churches whose spires adorn the skyline and have given Charleston its nickname: The Holy City.

INSTAGRAMMER

WHERE TO STAY > The Restoration
Epitomizing Southern hospitality, this boutique hotel is a hot spot for socializing in its photogenic community spaces: a courtyard, rooftop pool, European-style café and a library with a nightly wine and cheese reception. therestorationhotel.com

MORNING > Rainbow Row
One of Charleston's most iconic landmarks comprises 13 colorful homes on East Bay Street. Grab a to-go lunch at Goat Sheep Cow fromagerie a couple of blocks away after you 'gram your heart out. explorecharleston.com

WITH THE FAMILY

WHERE TO STAY > Wild Dunes Resort
From kids' marine biology classes to spa time and golf for the adults, everyone wins at this island resort. Rendezvous at one of six on-site restaurants to regale each other with your respective vacation adventures. wilddunes.com

MORNING > South Carolina Aquarium
Ever wanted to feed a stingray? The aquarium offers up-close looks at its more than 5,000 animals, including bald eagles, horseshoe crabs and alligators. Visit the Sea Turtle Care Center to learn about the rehabilitation journey of these endangered creatures. scaquarium.org

INQUIRING MIND

WHERE TO STAY > The Inn at Middleton Place
Middleton Place is a national historic landmark that shares the story of colonial landowners and portrays the plight of the enslaved people who enabled Charleston's wealth. The inn is a striking building set among tall pines along the Ashley River. middletonplace.org

MORNING > Middleton Place
Learn about slaves' everyday lives and labor at Eliza's House. Stare at gardeners demonstrate the skills that kept the plantation up and running. Wander through the opulent gardens to take in a rainbow of flower species. middletonplace.org
SHOP: The Skinny Dip
Designer Collective
After stocking up on funky jewelry and local artwork, head to the rooftop coffee and wine bar. Check the online calendar for the shop's pop-up events, including barre classes, trunk shows and DIY workshops. shoptheskinnydip.com

AFTERNOON
The Gibbes Museum of Art
Get lost exploring this downtown Beaux Arts museum. Highlights include the miniature portrait collection and Patrick Dougherty's woven-silk sculpture. gibbesmuseum.org

EVENING
The Citrus Club
The Dewberry's new lounge is perched upon the highest rooftop in the city. Come for the breathtaking view, stay for the citrus-inspired cocktails and the eye-popping artwork. thedewberry charleston.com

LUNCH
Martha Lou's Kitchen
Martha Lou Gadson is the real deal when it comes to traditional Lowcountry cuisine. Fried chicken and fish are the stars, but the sides and sweet tea won't disappoint. martha lou's kitchen.com

AFTERNOON
Fort Sumter National Monument
Confederate soldiers fired on Fort Sumter in April 1861, sparking the start of the Civil War. At this monument, which also includes Fort Moultrie, historical interpreters are on hand to discuss cultural context. nps.gov

EVENING
Prohibition
Old-school cocktails, mood lighting and live jazz evoke a 1920s speakeasy, but the menu is decidedly modern. If you arrive in time for happy hour, you're in luck: Local Lowcountry oysters are $1. prohibitioncharleston.com

LUNCH
Angel Oak Tree
Head to Johns Island—the largest island in the state, about 25 minutes from downtown—to picnic in the shade of a living legend: a towering 66-foot-tall oak tree estimated to be between 400 and 1,500 years old. discover south carolina.com

AFTERNOON
Folly Island
On this barrier island, you'll find white sand beaches, seafood joints and a vibrant year-round farmers market, home to unique vendors selling everything from pole bowls to raw honey kombucha. follybeach farmers market.org

LUNCH
Rodney Scott's BBQ
James Beard award winner Rodney Scott goes whole hog—literally—when it comes to barbecue. The South Carolina-raised chef slow-smokes his pigs all night long to create his signature smoky goodness. rodneyscottsbbq.com

AFTERNOON
Joe Riley Waterfront Park
Relax on the pier's family-sized swings, watch cruise ships go by. stroll around the pineapple fountain and cool off in the wading area. Look closely and you might catch a glimpse of an egret roosting on the banks.

DINNER
The Ordinary
Nothing brings a family together like the task of consuming an entire shellfish tower. This self-professed "fancy seafood" hall and oyster bar has just about every imaginable combination of seafood and equally fancy vegetarian options. the ordinary.com

LUNCH
Swig & Swine
Barbecue sauce is a hot topic here: Some swear by the mustard-based concoction unique to the south-central swatch of South Carolina, while others opt for vinegar, tomato, jalapeño or Alabama white varieties. Try them all at this wood-smoke joint. swigandswinebbq.com

AFTERNOON
Charleston City Market
Do a deep dive into Lowcountry African heritage with local company Gullah Tours, run by Alphonso Brown. At the market, artisans teach guests to sew sweetgrass baskets using locally harvested marsh grass. the charleston city market, gullah tours.com

DINNER
Xiao Bao Biscuit
This cozy multicultural eatery sits in a converted gas station and serves family-style comfort food with Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, Thai and Vietnamese influences that are reflective of the city's growing Asian population. xiaobao biscuit.com