

South Carolina golf named best in the country – top five in the world

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Columbia, S.C. – The International Association of Golf Travel Operators (IAGTO) has named South Carolina among the top five golf destinations in the world for 2023. The Palmetto State is the only US destination to make the list, sharing the coveted recognition with Cyprus, Dubai, Los Cabos, and Thailand.

The IAGTO Awards were created to celebrate outstanding service, performance, and quality throughout the global golf tourism industry. Now in their 22nd year, these award winners were selected after more than 500 golf tour operators voted for the destinations that delivered the best golf experiences to their customers in 2022.

“South Carolina is known for our beaches and our golf,” said South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism director, Duane Parrish. “That’s true stateside, and clearly with this incredible recognition, that’s true on an international level too. Drive through any golf course parking lot from Myrtle Beach to Hilton Head and you’ll spot license plates from states up and down the east coast. That net just continues to get wider and wider every year, as we welcome more golfers from across the US and all over the world thanks to the hard work of our golf industry. From the teams behind our iconic courses to the segments of the industry that make international golf travel to South Carolina so easy, like our tour operators and airports, so many people work together to make South Carolina a top destination for golf.”

Home to more than 350 courses and the annual RBC Heritage on Hilton Head Island and the BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation in Greenville, South Carolina has a long and rich golf tradition. In recent years, South Carolina has hosted a series of significant tournaments, including the 2021 PGA Championship at the famed Ocean Course at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, the 2021 Palmetto Championship at Congaree (which replaced the canceled RBC Canadian Open on the PGA TOUR), and THE CJ CUP in South Carolina in 2022. This unprecedented stream of South Carolina backdrops on golf’s biggest stages has inspired countless Palmetto State vacations, contributing to more feet on the state’s fairways as the sport’s popularity continues its historic resurgence.

A celebrated sector of South Carolina’s \$29 billion tourism industry (<https://www.scprt.com/articles/industry-announces-record-breaking-growth-and-gov-mcmaster-presents-annual-awards-at-sc-tourism-conference>), golf had an estimated \$3.3 billion impact on the state’s economy in 2021 – contributing to 38,000 jobs and \$18.3 million in Admissions Tax collections that year. Golf generates more income than any other single entertainment or recreation activity in South Carolina, and visitors who play golf during their trip to South Carolina spend an additional \$1.1 billion off-course.

For more information, contact Sam Queen at sam@scprt.com (mailto:sam@scprt.com) or 803-767-3568.

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View the Economic Impact of Golf in South Carolina data sheet (https://scprt.widen.net/s/gvzjnf6hf7/final_sc-golf-economic-impact---2021-stats).

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