

Weekender's Guide to Charleston

If you are planning a quick weekend getaway to the city of Charleston, be prepared for the overwhelming options for sightseeing, shopping and dining. There is so much to see and do in the Holy City that even those of us who are lucky enough to live here haven't quite managed to do it all yet. To help you make the most of your short stay, our weekender's guide to Charleston will tell you everything you need to know.

Take in Spectacular Views at Arthur Ravenel, Jr. Bridge

Connecting downtown Charleston to Mount Pleasant, the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge offers some amazing panoramic views that will take your breath away. At the center of the bridge, visitors can view the many ships passing through the Charleston Harbor and the famous church steeples that grace the city's skyline.

You can walk, run or bike the Ravenel Bridge, which is 2.5 miles one way or a 5-mile loop end to end. Start on the Mount Pleasant side from the parking lot of the Memorial Waterfront Park and head up the paved pathway that leads to the Ravenel Bridge. If you would rather not do the full 2.5 miles, you can stop at the halfway point to take in the marvelous views and then turn back to your starting point.

Relax on One of Charleston's Pristine Beaches

Charleston has an array of beautiful beaches that are suited to every type of beach-goer. Whether you want to soak in the sun or catch some waves, Folly Beach can't be beat. With miles of warm sand, excellent surf conditions and a laid back vibe, this beach offers the quintessential beach getaway. Stay in a Folly Beach vacation rental and enjoy some amazing coastal views just a few miles from downtown Charleston.

Those who want something more secluded might find Sullivan's Beach more to their liking. Located north of Charleston Harbor, this barrier island is ideal for romantic couples who want to take a quiet and peaceful stroll along the beach.

If you're looking for something more upscale, Isle of Palms and Kiawah Island will fit the bill perfectly. Both islands offer world-class golf, miles of beautiful beaches and upscale shopping boutiques for you to enjoy.

Take a Tour of Fort Sumter

A first-time visit to Charleston wouldn't be complete without a tour of Fort Sumter. As the site where the Civil War began, you will get to experience history first-hand and see where Confederate soldiers fired on this federal fort for 34 hours until Union forces surrendered.

Fort Sumter itself is free to visit, but it is only accessible by boat. You can purchase tour boat tickets through Fort Sumter Tours, which departs from two locations: Patriot's Point in Mount Pleasant and Liberty Square in downtown Charleston.

The boat tour provides some excellent views of the Charleston Harbor as you make your way to this important landmark. Park rangers are on standby to answer any of your questions as you take in enormous cannons, watch live rifle demonstrations and see shells embedded into the thick walls of Fort Sumter.

Farmer's Market

Starting in the spring and lasting until late fall, the Charleston Farmer's Market in Marion Square attracts both tourists and locals. The market is full of Lowcountry farmers, artisans, crafters, live performers and attractions that make this town favorite a truly unique experience.

Support local farmers in the Lowcountry by purchasing fresh produce or grab a bite to eat from one of the many vendors offering international cuisine. Of course, this is assuming that you aren't stuffed from the samplings of smoked meats, cheeses, pickles, seasoned nuts and other delectable goods that are offered to you at the market.

Although the food is delicious, the Charleston Farmer's Market isn't just a place to eat. You will also see a variety of products from local artisans. Pottery, jewelry, soaps and lotions, prints, pet products and more are offered here. Take a few minutes to enjoy live performers that entertain crowds outside the stalls before you leave!

Picnic at Battery Park

Battery Park, also known as White Point Gardens, is without a doubt one of the best spots in downtown Charleston. Pack a picnic to enjoy at this iconic landmark under the shade of the many oak trees and take in the history as you walk along the waterfront.

The Battery is lined with historic antebellum buildings and offers visitors amazing views of the harbor. Look out across the harbor and you can get a glimpse of Fort Sumter. You might even see the occasional dolphin!

There is history everywhere you look at Battery Park. Once a defensive seawall and promenade, the cannons and cannon balls still remain, and kids frequently climb on top of them for a good time.

Don't forget to grab some gelato for a tasty frozen treat as you stroll along the park.

View the Historical Buildings Downtown

History abounds in downtown Charleston. From the French Quarter to Harleston Village and the South of Broad, picturesque homes and historic buildings are everywhere in this city.

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to discover some of Charleston's historic buildings is by walking the Museum Mile. Situated along Meeting Street and running from the Charleston Visitor Center to the Nathaniel Russell House, the Museum Mile has an array of historic buildings and cultural sites in one convenient place.

Magnificent antebellum structures, such as the Aiken-Rhett House and the Joseph Manigault House, are featured along the Museum Mile, along with the Powder Magazine (South Carolina's oldest public building), the Old Slave Mart Museum, the Old Exchange & Provost Dungeon and much more.

Guide to Charleston: A Premier Vacation City

Award-winning cuisine, beautiful beaches and a rich history make Charleston a premiere vacation spot in the United States. With so much to do and see, it's simply impossible to enjoy everything the Holy City has to offer. If you only have a limited number of days in Charleston, these spots are essential additions to your itinerary.

For More:

- Explore Charleston, charlestoncvb.com/
- Fort Sumter, nps.gov/fosu/index.htm
- Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, www.sciway.net/sc-photos/charleston-county/ravenel-bridge.html
- Folly Beach Vacation Rentals, www.charlestoncoastvacations.com/
- See more on Charleston from our site [here](#).