

weeklong excursions

# SOUTHERN CITIES TAKE YOU BACK IN TIME

## CHARLESTON



Charleston's Edmonston-Alston House features a unique blend of architectural styles. COURTESY OF EXPLORECHARLESTON.COM

**W**ith a little imagination, a trip to one of our nation's historic Southern cities can seem like taking a trip back in time. In places like Charleston, S.C., Savannah, Ga., and Williamsburg, Va., life just seems a bit slower. Maybe it's the heat that slows the pace, or perhaps it's the simple Southern charm that governs the attitudes and lifestyle here. Whatever the reason, a visit to one of these Southern destinations is sure to inspire you to slow down and drink in everything they have to offer. If you're looking to get away for a week or longer, we've rounded up some great destinations of historic significance.

Named for King Charles II, Charleston is the historic site where the first shot of the Civil War was fired. Whether you're interested in exploring history, visiting antebellum mansions or touring famous forts, Charleston is filled with historic homes, lighthearted fun and Southern hospitality.

Start with a tour at one of the many house museums in the area. Edmonston-Alston House is a stunning combination of both Federal style and Greek Revival design, courtesy of the conflicting interests of its early owners. It's also the site where General Beauregard watched as Fort Sumter was attacked at the beginning of the Civil War. Magnolia Plantation and Gardens is the oldest public tourist site in the low country and the oldest public gardens in the country. You can tour the house and gardens, take a ride on the nature train, enjoy a boat tour or visit the petting zoo.

Charleston is also the place to take in a walking tour or pirate tour. Yes, we said pirate. Remember, Charleston is a port city. And back in the 1700s, the city was rife with pirates, including the infamous Anne Bonney and Calico Jack. Charleston is also a town where walking itself can be an experience, and a number of companies offer narrated tours with historic themes led by knowledgeable guides. You can stroll past hidden alleys, learn about the events that shaped this city and see the sites that played prominently in those historic moments.

**Things to see & do:** Charleston Museum, Charleston Pirate Tours, Charleston Strolls, Charleston Walks, Edmonston-Alston House, Fort Sumter, Magnolia Plantation & Gardens, Old Charleston Walking Tours, South Carolina Aquarium, Middleton Place, Drayton Hall, Magnolia Plantation & Gardens, Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston Museum, Rainbow Row (a series of colorful historic houses), Nathaniel Russell House Museum, Aiken-Rhett House Museum.

**More info:** [www.explorecharleston.com](http://www.explorecharleston.com), [www.oldcharlestontours.com](http://www.oldcharlestontours.com), [www.magnoliaplantation.com](http://www.magnoliaplantation.com), [www.charlestonwalks.com](http://www.charlestonwalks.com), [www.charlestonstrolls.com](http://www.charlestonstrolls.com), [www.charlestonpiratetour.com](http://www.charlestonpiratetour.com), [www.charlestonmuseum.org](http://www.charlestonmuseum.org), [scaquarium.org](http://scaquarium.org), [www.draytonhall.org](http://www.draytonhall.org), [www.middletonplace.org](http://www.middletonplace.org), [www.nps.gov/fosu](http://www.nps.gov/fosu), [www.gibbesmuseum.org](http://www.gibbesmuseum.org), [www.charlestonmuseum.org](http://www.charlestonmuseum.org), [www.historiccharleston.org](http://www.historiccharleston.org).

SEE SOUTHERN ON 12 >>





Savannah's Historic District is filled with historic homes, beautiful gardens and more. COURTESY OF SAVANNAHVISIT.COM

When John Berendt's book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* hit store shelves in 1994, it was a boom for the city of Savannah. Loosely based on a real-life murder mystery, the intriguing literary work drew thousands of tourists to this sleepy Southern city. Today, visitors can still take in a walking tour based on the characters and places (including grave sites) found in the book.

The Mercer House, completed in 1868, is the site of the murder that plays prominently in Berendt's book. Now fully restored and open to the public, the house offers visitors a glimpse at the furniture, art and lifestyle of the 18th and 19th centuries.

But Savannah's history is much more than a decades-old murder trial. The city dates back to 1733, the year that Gen. James Oglethorpe landed his ship along the Savannah River and named Georgia (after England's King George II) as the 13th and final of the American colonies. Today, visitors to the city can stroll through shady public squares that were designed by Oglethorpe.

A walk down the streets of Savannah reveals stunning homes, ornate ironwork, fountains and green squares. The Owens-Thomas House, considered to be one of our nation's best examples of the English Regency style of architecture, offers guest tours. Other attractions include Forsyth Fountain and the Olde Pink House (the site of Georgia's first bank and now a restaurant).

In historic Williamsburg, you can walk the streets our forefathers traveled as they formed the ideas that would govern our country. The city, named for England's King William III, once served as the seat of power for our budding nation.

Established in 1699, the city of Williamsburg today includes Colonial Williamsburg, a restored version of the Virginia colony's 18th century capital. Colonial Williamsburg serves as a living history museum; it includes 301 acres with 500 buildings that have been reconstructed and restored to appear as they would have in the 18th century. Here you can see tradesmen practicing historic trades and domestic crafts plus a cadre of historical interpreters and character actors who bring history to life before your eyes. You can even experience the riveting story of our country's revolution through Revolutionary City, a street theater experience that presents the tale of the founding fathers' struggle for independence.

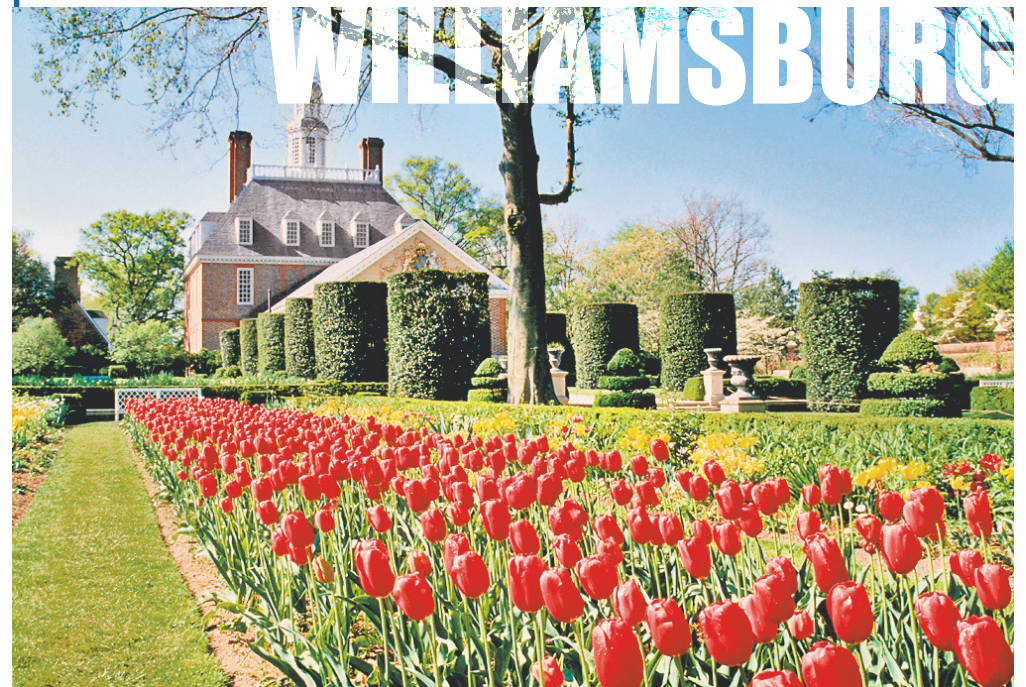
A short distance away in Charles City is Berkeley Plantation, Virginia's most historic plantation. Touted as the site of the first official Thanksgiving in 1619, it is also famous for being the birthplace of Benjamin Harrison (a signer of the Declaration of Independence) and of President William Henry Harrison. The home, which sits on the banks of the historic James River, is open for tours, as are its grounds and gardens.

**Things to see & do:** Berkeley Plantation, Revolutionary City, Williamsburg Inn, Spotswood Golf Course, Colonial Williamsburg, Governor's Palace, the state Capitol, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Historic Jamestowne, Historic Yorktown, College of William and Mary (second-oldest college in the country), Busch Gardens, Public Hospital Museum, Historic Ghost Walk of Williamsburg, Ripley's Believe It or Not!, the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg.

**More info:** [www.colonialwilliamsburg.com](http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com), [www.berkeleyplantation.com](http://www.berkeleyplantation.com), [www.history.org](http://www.history.org) (official site of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation), [www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org), [www.visitwilliamsburg.com](http://www.visitwilliamsburg.com), [www.gowilliamsburg.com](http://www.gowilliamsburg.com), [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org), [www.wm.edu](http://www.wm.edu), [seaworldparks.com](http://seaworldparks.com).

**Things to see & do:** Mercer Williams House Museum, Owens-Thomas House, Forsyth Park & Fountain, The Pirates' House (an inn mentioned in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*), the Herb House (oldest building in Georgia), the Olde Pink House, Flannery O'Connor Childhood Home, Bonaventure Cemetery (former site of the *Midnight* "Bird Girl" statue), Telfair Museum of Art (current home of the Bird Girl statue), SCAD Museum of Art, Green-Meldrim House (at St. John's Church), Mickve Israel Temple.

**More info:** [www.mercerhouse.com](http://www.mercerhouse.com), [www.telfair.org/visit/owens-thomas-house](http://www.telfair.org/visit/owens-thomas-house), [www.savannahvisit.com](http://www.savannahvisit.com), [www.flanneryoconnorhome.org](http://www.flanneryoconnorhome.org), [www.officialsavannahguide.com](http://www.officialsavannahguide.com), [www.bonaventurehistorical.org](http://www.bonaventurehistorical.org), [telfair.org](http://telfair.org), [www.stjohnssav.org](http://www.stjohnssav.org), [mickveisrael.org](http://mickveisrael.org).



The gardens at Governor's Palace cover more than 10 acres. COURTESY OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION