

Spring Celebration: Charleston & Beaufort, South Carolina

Mansions ~ Secret Gardens ~ Antiquity

Seven Day Tour ~ April 21-27, 2022

Highlights: Four Nights at the Boutique Elliott House Inn Downtown Charleston • Two Nights in the Historic Beaufort Inn • Fort Moultrie • Middleton Place • Calhoun Mansion • Charleston Carriage Ride Sightseeing Tour • Morris Island Lighthouse Boat Tour • Center For Birds of Prey • Sullivan's Island Lighthouse • Edmonston Altston House • Mrs. Whaley's Garden • Charleston Tea Plantation • Angel Oak Tree • The Kazoo Factory Tour • Historic Beaufort Trolley Tour • Verdier House • Cypress Wetlands Boardwalk • Habersham Marketplace • Free Time to Sightsee and Browse Downtown Charleston and Beaufort • All Breakfasts • Four Lunches • One Dinner • Fully Escorted

There is no better place to celebrate spring than the two most beautiful and historic towns in South Carolina! Charleston, the bigger port city with its elegant French Quarter and Battery districts made up of cobblestone streets, pastel antebellum houses, and secret gardens has an historical beauty with an ever-changing cultural scene that has exploded citywide, leaving a lot to explore. Beaufort, a smaller version of Charleston, is a picture-perfect scene filled with horse drawn carriages, centuries old mansions, salty sea air and comfy chairs on sweeping verandas. As soon as we arrive, we will delve into the Southern comfort, hospitality and relaxed pace. With this as our guide, we'll spend several leisurely days enjoying everything these two cities has to offer, leaving us with a feeling of an intimate adventure.

Day 1. After our arrival in Charleston, you will have time to explore this charming city on your own and take an included horse and carriage sightseeing tour at your leisure. A slow-paced stroll or carriage ride is the best way to see the city and soak in the sights and surroundings of the historic district. Our quaint, boutique Elliott House Inn will be within walking distance of a variety of shops, cafes, and restaurants to keep you busy for our first night in this lovely, historic city. Don't miss out on the included wine and cheese reception every night at our inn! Additionally, on our visit here, try not to miss the secret Mrs. Whaley's Garden, the only private garden open to the public, although by happenstance on afternoons Fri-Sun. Slip your \$10 donation through the front door mail slot and enjoy this quintessential garden the way Mrs. Emily Whaley would have wished.

Day 2. This morning we'll do something along the lesser known path in Charleston, visit the Avian Conservation's Center for Birds of Prey. Here we will gain a unique insight into understanding these majestic creatures and the significant role they play in our world. We'll be delighted with a guided tour that includes visiting a large variety of birds that now call the Conservation Center their home. We will then be wowed by a flight demonstration where we may see a falcon dive at a speed of over 100 mph and participate in a question answer session with the expert handlers. Our next stop will be the nearby Sullivan's Island where we will enjoy an included delicious lunch before making our way to Fort Moultrie, which has guarded the entrance to Charleston Harbor over the decades. Our tour of this fort, meticulously constructed of palmetto logs and sand in 1776, will reveal the stories of American Seacoast defense through World War II. After our encounter with history, we'll take a drive past the uniquely structured Charleston Light for a great photography option. Then we'll jump back into the past with none other than Edgar Allen Poe, who walked the streets of Sullivan Island while stationed here at Fort Moultrie. At Poe's Tavern we'll have a cocktail in his memory and maybe retell his island inspired story, "The Gold Bug".

Day 3. Today we'll feel the wind in our hair as we board a Carolina skiff bay boat that will wind us through pristine tidal creeks out to Morris Island. Along the way there's a chance to see bottlenose dolphins, sea turtles, oyster flats and wading birds while we learn about the local history, native wildlife, and diverse ecosystems we are now surrounded by. Our skiff will cruise out to an uninhabited barrier island where we will stop and immerse ourselves in the natural beauty the island provides. There will be time for shelling, dipping your toes in the sparkling water, just sitting in the sand, and taking in the spectacular views of the Morris Island Lighthouse. This cruise is scheduled according to the tides, so it may be a surprise as to when we are going that day! Our other sight to see today is the opulent Gilded Age Calhoun Mansion, 1876. This baronial Italianate manor house contains



Calhoun Mansion



Middleton Place Plantation

35 rooms with 14-foot ceilings, ornate mouldings, elaborate chandeliers, 23 fireplaces, a music room with a 45-foot glass covered skylight and an astonishing stairwell that reaches a 75-foot domed ceiling. After being wowed by this dazzling tour, there will be time to stroll the lovely English Gardens surrounding this amazing creation. The rest of the evening will be yours to enjoy downtown Charlestown where you may want to delve into the delectable low country cuisine or other variety of restaurants for dinner on your own.

Day 4. Time will move backwards today when we visit the Middleton Place National Historic Landmark, an 18th century rice plantation nestled along the Ashley River that is comprised of America's oldest landscaped gardens. Here, we will stand on the same land as generations of the enslaved and the free, take in its exquisite beauty along with its inherent brutality as we hear and understand the stories that make up this historic place. We will have a guided tour of the House Museum containing an extraordinary collection dating from the 1740s through the Civil War. We will also have access to the 65 acres of landscaped gardens and the Stableyards where skilled enslaved artisans made tools, pottery, clothing and tended livestock. Take your time strolling the garden paths along with enjoying our included lunch at the Middleton Place Restaurant. After our return to downtown Charleston, we will visit the historic Edmonston Altman House built in 1825. Our tour here will take us through the home's public rooms and piazzas with their magnificent views of Charleston Harbor. The remainder of the night is yours to spend among Charleston's downtown as you please.

Day 5. Today we say goodbye to Charleston and start our journey to the lovely and captivating Beaufort, with several magnificent stops along the way. Our first may be one of the most spectacular, rare sights you've ever had the privilege to see; the Angel Oak Tree. This is no ordinary, run of the mill tree. This beauty is estimated to be in excess of 500 years old and some believe that it is actually 1500 years old! Words can't begin to describe; it definitely must be seen to be fully appreciated. Our next stop is another spectacle for the eyes, the Charleston Tea Plantation, the only tea garden in North America where you can see thousands of tea bushes stretching out acre after acre as far as the eye can see. A trolley tour will take us through the acres of tea bushes and teach us everything we ever wanted to know about tea. There will be time to explore the greenhouse, take an informative tea factory tour and enjoy an included boxed lunch to eat among the Live Oak Trees. Our last stop before Beaufort will be a blast from the past and leave us feeling like we are 5 years old again! At the Kazoobie Kazoo factory we will take a fun guided tour of the factory, watch kazoo demonstrations, and have the chance to make your own kazoo. Once we arrive in Beaufort, the rest of the evening will be yours to explore this charming town and find a nice relaxing place for dinner on your own.

Day 6. This morning we will experience over 300 years of history on our guided trolley tour of charming downtown Beaufort that will take us past sweeping antebellum homes, scenic views, historic churches and famous movie sites. You may be surprised to know that more than 40 years before the English settled at Jamestown, the Spanish established a town and fort right here in Beaufort. Now is time to have lunch on your own and explore more of this beautiful town perfect for wandering. Later in the afternoon we'll meet for an historic tour of the John Mark Verdier House Museum. This Federal style mansion built in 1805 has a diverse background as a perfect representation of the Planter's Class wealth and as an army headquarters and the adjutant general's office. Today it offers intricate Federal style woodwork, a scale model diorama of Bay Street in 1863, an exhibit about Robert Smalls, the first African American to serve in the US Congress, civil war photos of Bay Street during the Union occupation, and the Beaufort Voluntary Artillery. On our way to our next adventure of the evening, we will take a step into nature at the Cypress Wetlands where we can stroll along a half mile boardwalk and view the wildlife, flora and fauna. Then onto Habersham Marketplace a quaint walkable village filled with unique merchants, vibrant outdoor patios and plazas. There will be many choices here for a fantastic dinner on your own.

Day 7. Today we travel north back to New Jersey, filled with all the warmth and charm we experienced during our time in the South.

Air transportation is provided by United Airlines. A surcharge will apply if United Airlines increases the price of its airfare. One piece of luggage per person (baggage fee by United is not included) and one small carry-on are permitted. **A valid, government-issued picture ID is required to board the plane.**

Thursday, April 21: Flight # departs Newark at AM and arrives in Charleston at PM

Wednesday, April 27: Flight # departs Charleston at PM and arrives in Newark at PM

Price per person is \$2,595 Twin & \$3,195 Single. No reservations accepted without a deposit of \$350 per person. Make checks payable to "Group Tours & Travel", and mail to our address. Final payment is due January 1, 2022. Deposits are fully refundable if cancellation occurs on or before January 1, 2022. There are no refunds if cancellation occurs after January 1, 2022. One piece of luggage per person and one carry-on are permitted. Group Tours is not responsible for any delays, cancellations, injuries or circumstances beyond its control and reserves the right to change the itinerary. All trip components are subject to change in accordance with Government, State and Local guidelines and/or mandates. Travel protection/cancellation coverage is available and highly recommended but not included. This tour will run rain or shine. Visit our website at www.grouptoursandtravel.com for additional tours and pictures.

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Please Reserve _____ seat(s). The enclosed check is for: \$_____ #3200

Legal Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Rooming with: _____ Phone: _____

For email confirmation of registration and final payment notice: _____