

South Carolina & Georgia: Charleston to Savannah

Bike Vacation Only

Coast your way into the genteel South. Among Charleston and Savannah bike tours, VBT's immerses you most fully in rich culture and breathtaking beauty. Kick up your feet during a traditional Beaufort social. Discover the fascinating ways of the Gullah people on the Sea Islands. Ride beneath Spanish moss dripping from live oaks. And marvel at historic architecture and endless antebellum charms. You're sure to fall under the spell of the South during this captivating ride.

Cultural Highlights

Cycle by the pastel-hued houses of Charleston, marveling at views of sailboats and historic Fort Sumter
Traverse the beautiful coastal islands of the Intracoastal Waterway by bike
Visit Fort Moultrie and summon the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe, who once served here
Explore the many charms of Beaufort, named "the South's Best Small Town" by *Southern Living* in 2017
Immerse yourself in the legacy of the Gullah people when you visit the culture-rich Penn Center
Stroll past the antebellum architectural beauties of Beaufort with a local guide
Step back in time among the charming streets of Savannah during a guided tour
Ride beneath a magnificent avenue flanked by live oaks as you approach historic Wormsloe Plantation
Take in the eerie beauty of the famed Bonaventure Cemetery with its moss-hung gardens
Cycle beneath the live oaks of the Spanish Moss Trail

What to Expect

This tour offers options for easy rides throughout the trip. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance. This vacation is ideal for beginning and casual cyclists.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 4 - 50

Average Cycling Time: 00:30 - 03:30

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Mar 68°/48°, Apr 76°/55°, May 83°/64°, Sep 85°/69°, Oct 77°/58°, Nov 69°/48°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Mar 3.58, Apr 3.07, May 3.01, Sep 5.06, Oct 3.12, Nov 2.47

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Arrive in Charleston / Warm-up ride / Welcome reception and dinner

Travel to Charleston and gather at the Ansonborough Inn, the first hotel on our itinerary. If you're flying in, you can arrange to meet VBT's complimentary shuttle after your arrival at Charleston International Airport. The shuttle leaves the airport at 2:00 p.m. Please call Mount Pleasant Shuttle at 843-971-4901 (or toll-free 866-223-7226) to make a reservation, clearly stating you are a VBT guest. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Mount Pleasant must have your names and your airline and flight number.

If you are arriving after this shuttle departs or if your flight is delayed, you must make your own arrangements to reach the inn. For guests who are driving to the tour, parking will be available at the Ansonborough Inn for the week at a daily charge of \$15 plus tax. Parking is also available at the Charleston airport for \$8 per day. At tour's end, a complimentary shuttle will bring guests back to the airport. And if you leave your car at the Ansonborough Inn, you can take a taxi there from the airport at a cost of approximately \$30.

Please contact the Ansonborough Inn to advise of any travel delays or changes; they will pass your message along to your VBT trip leaders.

Meet your VBT trip leaders at 3:00 p.m. for a safety briefing and bike-fitting session, followed by a warm-up ride. You wind your way through historic "South of Broad," taking in wide views of the harbor and Fort Sumter. Then continue riding through the historic market. You also ride past St. Philip's Church, one of Charleston's oldest, located on appropriately named Church Street.

Tonight, get to know your fellow travelers during a welcome reception at the inn, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

Hotel: Ansonborough Inn

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Afternoon:

Charleston Warm-Up: 4 miles

What to Expect: Cycling south, you pass the large fountain at the Waterfront Park entrance. It's a

wonderful place to stroll in the evening and watch the sailboats on the harbor or the sunset at Ravenel Bridge. On East Bay Street, pass “Rainbow Row,” the historic neighborhood of pastel-colored houses. Biking along the Battery, you see Fort Sumter, which guards the harbor entrance where the first shots of the Civil War were fired in 1861.

In a city defined by its steeples, St. Philip’s Church boasts one of the oldest. You ride past it during your warm-up ride, then head to the historic City Market, where sweetgrass baskets are still handcrafted with local pride. Mind the horse carriages as you pass the stables on Anson Street back to the Ansonborough Inn.

DAY 2: Cooper River / Cycle through Sullivan’s Island and Isle of Palms

After breakfast, you cycle along a dedicated bike/pedestrian lane on the dramatic Arthur Ravenel Bridge over the Cooper River. Traverse Sullivan’s Island, then cross another bridge to the Isle of Palms. Our route follows the scenic shores of the Intracoastal Waterway passing by some of the area’s most sought-after homes. As you ride, enjoy soothing vistas the beach. During your lunch stop, you have the opportunity to change into swim clothes and go for a swim.

After lunch at a local restaurant on the Isle of Palms, continue cycling to Fort Moultrie. Edgar Allan Poe was stationed here from 1827 to 1828 while serving in the U.S. Army. The fortress played a key role in both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. After your visit, return to the Ansonborough Inn, where there’ll be time to explore Charleston on your own. Perhaps enjoy a stroll along the Battery, the promenade flanking the city’s scenic harbor.

Dinner is on your own tonight.

Hotel: Ansonborough Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today’s Ride Choice:

Morning:

Charleston to Sullivan’s Island and lunch: 14 miles

Afternoon:

Sullivan’s Island to Charleston: 16 miles

What to Expect: Cycle from the Ansonborough Inn over the Arthur Ravenel Bridge, enjoying expansive

views of downtown, Charleston Harbor, and the Atlantic. When you arrive on the Isle of Palms for lunch, you will have time to visit the beach with boardwalk access, changing rooms, and showers.

After lunch, ride back through Sullivan's Island to Fort Moultrie. Explore this National Monument and then retrace your way back to the Ansonborough Inn by bike or hop in the VBT support vehicle for a shuttle back.

DAY 3: Shuttle to Beaufort / Cycle to Port Royal / Experience a Beaufort Social

Today, you shuttle about 70 minutes south to Beaufort, where you cycle the stunning Spanish Moss Trail. Formerly the path of the Port Royal Railroad, this 12-foot wide, multi-purpose paved trail offers beautiful water and marsh views, coastal wildlife viewing, and historic points of interest as it meanders through neighborhoods draped in Spanish moss. The invigorating trail delivers you to Port Royal, a quaint Lowcountry town in the heart of a biologically rich estuarine ecosystem. After time to admire its houses listed on the National Historic Register, follow another segment of the Spanish Moss Trail to Beaufort, along the way you pause for a delicious picnic lunch of local specialties prepared by your trip leaders.

End your rewarding cycling day in Beaufort. Named "The South's Best Small Town" by *Southern Living* magazine in 2017, it is a charming haven renowned for its Sea Islands, historic downtown and savory Lowcountry food. Check into your hotel here and make yourself at home. The Beaufort Inn is conveniently located to give you easy access to the city's waterfront and beyond.

Enjoy a Lowcountry boil before experiencing firsthand a famous Southern tradition at your inn: a Beaufort social hosted by a local historian. Enjoy this fun opportunity to dance the exuberant yet dignified Virginia Reel, a Colonial-era folk dance, while learning about the culture and history of Beaufort and its people.

If you wish to partake of the Beaufort Inn's spa services during your stay, VBT encourages you to make your reservations well in advance of your arrival.

Hotel: The Beaufort Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Morning:

Spanish Moss Trail: 15 miles

What to Expect: Cycle along the tranquil Spanish Moss Trail to Port Royal, where several buildings and

homes are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Stop at the Sands boardwalk and observation tower for views of the Beaufort River and a possible sighting of dolphins. As you pass through Port Royal, take time to visit the Cypress Wetlands so see a unique ecosystem of the area. Your ride will conclude at your inn in the center of Beaufort.

DAY 4: St. Helena Island / Walking Tour of Beaufort

After breakfast in town, ride through beautiful farmland to St. Helena Island, passing the historic Chapel of Ease along your way. During the Colonial period, rice and cotton planters who found themselves too far from the churches of Beaufort constructed informal “chapels of ease” on their plantations. Built in the mid-18th century, St. Helena’s Chapel of Ease was largely destroyed by a fire more than 100 years later. Its four original walls remain, making it an evocative historic landmark. Today’s lunch will be a picnic prepared by your trip leaders.

After your ride, enjoy a visit to the Penn Center, a National Monument and the first institution to recognize the Reconstruction Era of the South. Founded in 1862 to educate freed slaves, it’s now a cultural center for African-American residents of the Sea Islands, a community also known as Gullahs. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held the annual retreat for his Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the center. After an enriching visit, return to Beaufort via shuttle or bike.

Later, embark on a walking tour of Beaufort. Stroll past the city’s mix of antebellum mansions, live oaks, and charming 1950s storefronts with a resident guide, who explains why the town has lured so many moviemakers to its lovely streets. A number of critically acclaimed films have used Beaufort as their backdrops, including *Forrest Gump* with Tom Hanks, *The Prince of Tides* with Barbra Streisand, and *The Great Santini* with Robert Duvall.

Make your own dinner plans in Beaufort this evening; there are many excellent restaurants from which to choose.

Hotel: The Beaufort Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today’s Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 36 miles

Morning:

Beaufort to Helena Island: 36 miles

What to Expect: If you wish, you may shuttle to St. Helena Island to begin this morning's ride. During this pleasant reel on coastal routes, pause at Land's End Point to explore the beach. Continue on Seaside Road through beautiful farmland, then return to the Penn Center. Those who want a longer ride can start from the inn and cycle across Lady's Island to St. Helena Island. After your picnic lunch and tour, you can shuttle or cycle back to Beaufort in the afternoon.

DAY 5: Shuttle to Savannah / Cycle Isle of Hope to Wormsloe Historic Site

This morning, shuttle to Savannah (approximately 90 minutes). Once you have arrived you pedal out of Savannah toward the Isle of Hope. Here, cycle past attractive old homes dating from the early 19th century, enjoying views of the Intracoastal Waterway as you ride.

Our destination this morning is informally known as Wormsloe Plantation, a State Historic Site. One of the most photographed locations in the entire South, it features a 1.5-mile-long live oak avenue framed by a graceful stone entry arch. The remains of the estate—which was constructed using “tabby,” a building material similar to cement and made from lime, ash and crushed oyster shells—are renowned as the oldest standing structure in Savannah.

After some free time for lunch on your own in the Isle of Hope area, continue cycling past Savannah State University's Thunderbolt campus and the moss-hung gardens of Bonaventure Cemetery, an 18th-century cemetery featured in John Berendt's critically acclaimed novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

After you settle in at your hotel, the remainder of the afternoon is yours to explore Savannah at leisure.

Lunch and dinner are on your own today.

Hotel: Andaz Savannah

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choice:

Morning:

Isle of Hope: 27 miles

What to Expect: As you leave the city center, you ride past seven of Savannah's city squares. Pedal past Savannah State University toward the waterfront. On the Isle of Hope, ride past stately homes and enjoy marsh views. Visit Wormsloe Historic Site, and the Bonaventure Cemetery. Ride through downtown neighborhoods of different architectural styles back to Savannah.

DAY 6: Walking Tour of Savannah / Farewell dinner

This morning, spend time exploring some of the most memorable sites of this city. A fascinating walking tour of its picturesque streets and squares provides insight into the city's history, architecture, gardens and abundant charm. Did you know that Savannah boasts the oldest standing antebellum railroad complex in America? Or that Savannah had the first practical cotton gin? Your guide will help you envision Savannah as a colony, as a burgeoning city of the Victorian Era, and as a thriving modern-day cultural center. Other Savannah bike tours miss the in-depth exploration you'll enjoy during your visit.

You'll have free time to explore and have lunch on your own.

Tonight, celebrate with the group during a farewell dinner at the hotel.

Hotel: Andaz Savannah

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Non-biking Day: Explore Savannah at your leisure

DAY 7: VBT Bicycle Vacation ends / Depart for home

Your tour concludes after breakfast this morning. A complimentary VBT shuttle is available to take departing guests back to the Charleston airport (CHS), arriving around 11:30 a.m. We suggest a flight departing no earlier than 2:00 p.m. Guests with cars parked at the Ansonborough Inn should plan to take a taxi from the Charleston airport to the inn. The cost is about \$30.

You may choose instead to fly out of Savannah. We do not offer shuttle service to the Savannah airport. A taxi from the hotel to Savannah International Airport costs about \$25.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

The Ansonborough Inn (Days: 1,2)

The Ansonborough Inn is located within Charleston's historic district of Ansonborough, so named when Admiral George Anson won the property in a spirited poker game. Just one block north of the Market Street area, it is centrally located and close to all of historic downtown Charleston. Once a shipping warehouse, the property was transformed into a luxury hotel after a \$3.5 million renovation. With only 46 rooms, the hotel makes guests feel very much at home. Rooms range in size from 450 to 750 square feet and feature individual climate control, voice mail, mini-fridge, microwave, high-speed WiFi, and in-room safe. Enjoy the hotel's expanded continental breakfast and daily wine-and-cheese reception. The rooftop deck and cozy pub offer relaxing spots for a drink.

Andaz Savannah (Days: 5,6)

Sophisticated and modern, the Andaz Savannah is a stylish haven on the edge of the historical district. This artfully decorated hotel is just a few blocks from River Street, the bustling shopping avenue along the Savannah River, and set right on Ellis Square, a lively urban square of fountains and a life-sized chess set. Relax on the outdoor pool terrace, and enjoy a handcrafted cocktail before settling into your air conditioned guest room, graced with fine linens, comfortable robes, and a walk-in shower. Free WiFi is available.

The Beaufort Inn (Days: 3,4)

With a majestic main house and several adjacent cottages, the award-winning Beaufort Inn occupies an entire block in the city of Beaufort's historic district. A splendid example of Victorian architecture, the complex dates to the 1890s and features elegant gables, wraparound porches lined with inviting rocking chairs, and a lush, manicured garden. During your stay, you may wish to relax with a massage at the inn's on-site spa, or enjoy afternoon tea in one of its mahogany-paneled dining rooms. Each of the Beaufort Inn's 28 rooms is air-conditioned and equipped with cable/satellite television and complimentary wireless Internet access.