

South Carolina & Georgia: Charleston to Savannah

Bike Vacation Only

You are invited to experience true Southern hospitality as you cycle the coastline from Charleston to Savannah—discovering the region’s vibrant local culture along the way. Join us for a traditional “Beaufort social”—a quintessential Southern experience. Here, you’ll rub elbows with your neighbors—and perhaps even swing them around while dancing the Virginia Reel. As you cycle the famous Intercoastal Waterway and Spanish Moss trails, you’ll explore local culture from many perspectives, including a visit to Fort Moultrie, where Edgar Allen Poe was once stationed, a picnic at historic Fripp Plantation, and a guided tour of the Penn Center—the first Southern school dedicated to the education of former slaves. From the moss-draped streets of Savannah, you’ll cycle to the scenic Isle of Hope, all in the company of local guides who call the region home.

Cultural Highlights

- Cycle by the pastel-hued houses of Charleston, marveling at views of sailboats and historic Fort Sumter.
- Immerse yourself in the legacy of the Gullah people when you visit the Sea Island of St. Helena and the culture-rich Penn Center.
- Step back in time with a cycle through the famed Bonaventure Cemetery and a guided walking tour of the charming streets of Savannah.
- Ride beneath a magnificent avenue flanked by live oaks as you approach historic Wormsloe Plantation.
- Cycle beneath the live oaks of the Spanish Moss Trail to arrive among the antebellum architecture of Beaufort.

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: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 4-36 miles

Average Cycling Time: 1-4 hours

Group size: 14-20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

March 68°/48°, April 76°/55°, May 83°/64°, September 85°/69°, October 77°/58°, November 69°/48°

Average Rainfall (in.)

March 3.58, April 3.07, May 3.01, September 5.06, October 3.12, November 2.47

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Warm-Up Ride / Welcome Reception & Dinner

Travel to Charleston and gather at the Ansonborough, the first hotel on our itinerary. If you're flying in, you may arrange to meet VBT's complimentary shuttle upon arrival at Charleston International Airport. The shuttle departs at 2:00 p.m.

We recommend flying into Charleston and out of Savannah. For guests driving to the tour, parking is available at the Ansonborough and at Charleston International Airport. At the end of the tour, you may join the VBT van returning from Savannah to Charleston airport. If you've left your car at the Ansonborough, a taxi from the airport to the hotel is available.

Your safety briefing and bike-fitting session is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Enjoy a warm-up ride through historic "South of Broad," taking in panoramic views of the harbor and Fort Sumter. Continue past the historic market and St. Philip's Church—one of Charleston's oldest—on charming Church Street.

This evening, get to know your fellow travelers during a tour orientation, welcome reception, and dinner at a local restaurant.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Charleston Warm-Up Ride — 4 miles

What to Expect:

Cycling south, you'll pass the large fountain at the entrance to Waterfront Park—a lovely spot for an evening stroll, with sailboats drifting across the harbor and sunsets over the Ravenel Bridge. On East Bay Street, take in "Rainbow Row," a historic stretch of pastel-colored homes. As you ride along the Battery, enjoy views of Fort Sumter, guarding the harbor where the first shots of the Civil War were fired in 1861. In a city defined by its steeples, St. Philip's Church stands out with one of the oldest; you'll ride past it on your warm-up loop. Then, continue to the historic City Market, where artisans still handcraft sweetgrass

baskets with local pride. Watch for horse-drawn carriages as you pass the stables on Anson Street, returning to the Ansonborough Inn.

Cumulative Distance Range: 4 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Cooper River Ride / Cycle Sullivan's Island & Isle of Palms

After breakfast, cycle along a dedicated bike and pedestrian lane on the dramatic Arthur Ravenel Bridge, soaring over the Cooper River. Traverse Sullivan's Island, then cross another bridge to reach the Isle of Palms. Your route follows the scenic shores of the Intracoastal Waterway, passing some of the area's most sought-after homes and offering soothing beach vistas. During your lunch stop, you'll have the opportunity to change into swimwear and enjoy a dip in the ocean.

After lunch at a local restaurant on the Isle of Palms, continue cycling to historic Fort Moultrie. Edgar Allan Poe was stationed here from 1827 to 1828 while serving in the U.S. Army. The fortress played a significant role in both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. After your visit, return to Charleston via the Arthur Ravenel Bridge.

Once back at the Ansonborough, take time to explore Charleston on your own—perhaps with a stroll along the Battery, the promenade flanking the city's scenic harbor.

Dinner is on your own this evening.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Charleston to Sullivan's Island and Lunch — 14 miles

Afternoon: Sullivan's Island to Charleston — 17 miles

What to Expect:

Cycle from the Ansonborough Inn over the Arthur Ravenel Bridge, enjoying expansive views of downtown Charleston, the harbor, and the Atlantic. Continue to the Isle of Palms for lunch, with the option to swim at the beach. Afterward, ride back through Sullivan's Island to visit Fort Moultrie, a National Monument rich

in Revolutionary and Civil War history. Then retrace your route to the Ansonborough Inn by bike or shuttle. This evening, enjoy free time to explore Charleston and dine at one of its many Southern-style restaurants.

Cumulative Distance Range: 14 – 31 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3: Shuttle to Beaufort / Cycle the Spanish Moss Trail to Port Royal / Experience a Beaufort Social

Today, you shuttle about 70 minutes south to Beaufort, where you'll cycle the scenic Spanish Moss Trail. Once the route of the Port Royal Railroad, this 12-foot-wide, multi-use paved trail offers sweeping marsh and water views, coastal wildlife sightings, and historical points of interest as it winds through neighborhoods shaded by moss-draped oaks. The invigorating ride brings you to Port Royal, a quaint Lowcountry town nestled in a biologically rich estuarine ecosystem. After time to admire its homes listed on the National Historic Register, continue along another section of the trail to Beaufort. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch on your own at one of the town's many inviting restaurants.

End your rewarding day in Beaufort, named "The South's Best Small Town" by *Southern Living* magazine in 2017. This charming haven is known for its Sea Islands, historic downtown, and signature Lowcountry cuisine. Settle in at the Beaufort Inn, ideally located for exploring the city's downtown and waterfront.

This evening, enjoy a traditional Lowcountry boil before taking part in a beloved Southern tradition: a Beaufort social hosted by a local historian. Try your hand at the Virginia Reel—a spirited Colonial-era folk dance—and gain fascinating insights into Beaufort's rich culture and history.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Spanish Moss Trail — 15 miles

What to Expect:

Cycle along the tranquil Spanish Moss Trail to Port Royal, home to several buildings and homes listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Stop at the Sands boardwalk and observation tower for sweeping views of the Beaufort River and a chance to spot dolphins. As you ride through Port Royal, take

time to visit the Cypress Wetlands, a unique local ecosystem. Your ride concludes at your inn in the heart of Beaufort.

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

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

Enjoy breakfast in town, then cycle through scenic farmland to St. Helena Island, passing the historic Chapel of Ease along the way. During the Colonial period, planters who lived too far from the churches of Beaufort built informal “chapels of ease” on their plantations. Constructed in the mid-18th century, St. Helena’s Chapel of Ease was largely destroyed by fire more than 100 years later. Its four original tabby walls remain, making it an evocative and haunting historic landmark.

Your visit to Fripp Plantation begins as you ride down its white fence-lined driveway, where you’ll be welcomed by your VBT trip leaders and a local guide. While your leaders prepare a picnic lunch, your guide shares the rich history of the plantation during a walking tour of the property. After the tour, enjoy your lunch under the shade of pecan trees overlooking the water.

This afternoon, ride to the Penn Center for an included visit. A designated National Monument, the Penn Center was the first institution in the South to recognize the Reconstruction Era. Founded in 1862 to educate newly freed slaves, it now serves as a cultural hub for the Gullah community. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once held annual retreats here for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. After this enlightening stop, return to Beaufort by shuttle or bicycle.

Later, join a guided walking tour of Beaufort. As you stroll past antebellum mansions, moss-draped live oaks, and 1950s-era storefronts, your local guide will highlight why this town has become a favorite of Hollywood filmmakers. Beaufort has served as the setting for several acclaimed movies, including *Forrest Gump*, *The Prince of Tides*, and *The Great Santini*.

Tonight, enjoy dinner on your own in Beaufort, with a variety of excellent restaurants to choose from.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: St. Helena Island Loop — 22 miles OR Beaufort to St. Helena Island — 36 miles

What to Expect:

If you wish, you may shuttle to St. Helena Island to begin this morning's ride. Enjoy a pleasant route along coastal roads, pausing at Land's End Point to explore the beach. Continue along Seaside Road through beautiful farmland before returning to the Penn Center. Guests seeking a longer ride may begin from the inn, cycling across Lady's Island to St. Helena Island. After your visit to the Penn Center, you may shuttle or cycle back to Beaufort in the afternoon.

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 – 36 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

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

This morning, shuttle to Savannah (approximately 90 minutes). Upon arrival, your Savannah bike tour begins with a ride through the moss-draped gardens of Bonaventure Cemetery, an 18th-century burial ground featured in John Berendt's acclaimed novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Naturalist John Muir also spent six nights here during his "Thousand-Mile Walk" to the Gulf of Florida.

Continue cycling toward the Isle of Hope, passing attractive historic homes dating from the early 19th century and enjoying views of the Intracoastal Waterway. Your destination is the site informally known as Wormsloe Plantation, a Georgia State Historic Site. One of the most photographed places in the South, it features a 1.5-mile-long avenue of live oaks framed by a graceful stone arch. The estate's tabby ruins—constructed from lime, ash, and crushed oyster shells—are the oldest standing structure in Savannah.

Enjoy a picnic lunch hosted by your trip leaders before continuing the ride back into Savannah. This evening, celebrate with your fellow travelers during a festive farewell dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Isle of Hope — 22 miles

What to Expect:

Ride through Bonaventure Cemetery, then continue to the Isle of Hope, passing stately homes and scenic marshlands. Visit Wormsloe Historic Site before cycling through Savannah's neighborhoods, showcasing a variety of architectural styles.

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: Savannah Walking Tour / Your VBT Vacation Ends

After breakfast this morning, join a local guide for a walking tour of Savannah. VBT's complimentary shuttle will take departing guests to the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV), departing the hotel at 11:15 a.m. and arriving at the airport around 12:00 p.m. for your departing flight. We recommend scheduling a flight that departs no earlier than 2:00 p.m. Guests who need to arrive at the airport earlier or later must make their own arrangements.

The VBT van is also available to transport guests to Charleston International Airport (CHS), arriving at approximately 1:45 p.m. If you've left your car at the Ansonborough, you may take a taxi there from the Charleston airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

The Ansonborough (Days 1-2)

The Ansonborough 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.

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 Inns 28 rooms is air-conditioned and equipped with cable/satellite television and complimentary wireless Internet access.

Andaz Savannah (Day 5)

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.