

Suggested Itinerary:

North Carolina and the Coast of South Carolina and Georgia

Enjoy the high energy of Charlotte, North Carolina, with its passion for auto racing, professional sports and modern museums, then retreat to the Atlantic Ocean coast in South Carolina and Georgia, where a string of historic cities, classic beach towns and islands await with pristine sands, wildlife-watching and championship golf.

Charlotte, North Carolina

Suggested: 2-3 days

Curious about American stock car racing? Experience a pit stop simulation at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, then watch a race – or drive a race car – at nearby Charlotte Motor Speedway. Sports fans also can enjoy Carolina Panthers football, Charlotte Hornets basketball and Charlotte Knights baseball. Keep the energy high at the U.S. National Whitewater Center. At this outdoor playground, you'll choose your own adventure, including white-water rafting, zip-lining and rock climbing. Charlotte doubles as a cultural capital. Don't miss the international Craft + Design collection at the Mint Museum Uptown or the oral histories and other thought-provoking exhibits at the Levine Museum of the New South.

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Suggested: 2-3 days

In this classic beach town, comb the white sands of the Atlantic Ocean coast for seashells, then drift into Broadway at the Beach, a spirited collection of open-air shops and restaurants specializing in local seafood. Diversions include a water park, helicopter tours and Ripley's Aquarium, where you can glide through a tank filled with stingrays and sharks. View native animals in their element with area wildlife tours that range from ocean-side dolphin-sighting cruises to river tours offering glimpses of alligators and eye-catching birds.

Charleston, South Carolina

Suggested: 3 days

Charleston's signature is its antebellum mansions painted in a rainbow of colours and featuring elaborate ironwork. Join a walking tour for the best view of these homes, their gardens and the Battery, Charleston's historic waterfront promenade. Shop at City Market for souvenirs, including sweetgrass baskets, an essential tool on former rice plantations. Tour a plantation at Middleton Place, featuring the 18th century House Museum and Stableyards. History also comes alive at Fort Sumter National Monument, where the American Civil War began. The site looks over Folly Beach and Sullivan's Island with wide beaches, locally owned restaurants and activities such as surfing and kayaking.

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Suggested: 2-4 days

Retreat to Hilton Head Island for pristine beaches. Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge, with a wealth of trails and bird-watching opportunities, is a good bet. Golfers can select from more than 30 championship courses. Overall, the island is ideal for relaxing in South Carolina's Lowcountry. The Coastal Discovery Museum showcases the landscape; stroll beneath the site's massive live oak trees and along boardwalks that span native marshes teeming with wildlife. Don't leave the island without taking a tour of the iconic Harbour Town Lighthouse, picture-perfect with red and white stripes.

Savannah, Georgia

Suggested: 2 days

Savannah's historic district is a collection of pretty town squares and preserved architecture. Join a history or ghost tour to acquaint yourself. Later, linger at landmarks such as Forsyth Park, where residents and visitors have gathered for generations around a spectacular fountain. Heading toward the Savannah River, pause for a self-guided tour of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist; its towering twin steeples are a fixture on the Savannah skyline. Continue to City Market's courtyards and squares with restaurants, shops and galleries. For a side trip, visit Tybee Island for a lighthouse tour, paddling excursion or charter cruise.

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