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South Carolina: Southern Charm October 18 – 24, 2016

Experience the history, nature, and culture of the charming South Carolina coast. This Revolutionary and Civil War port city offers Southern Charm like no other.

Explore from historical Savannah, Georgia, stopping at historic Ft. Sumter, Ft. Moultrie, and Morris Island Lighthouse, north to Charleston, South Carolina, named the #1 Best U.S. City by *Condé Nast Travel*.

Spend two days walking and birding charming Folly Beach.

Experience the natural diversity of ACE Basin, a large estuary system protected by a dynamic partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, national conservation organizations, and local landowners. This expansive National Wildlife Refuge protects over 1-million acres that stretch between Charlotte and Savannah. A rich mix of habitats and 700,000+ estuary acres are a haven to endangered wildlife.

Enjoy the Southern Charm of horse-drawn carriage rides over cobblestone streets, bird the famous Magnolia Plantation gardens, tour antebellum mansions and museums, and dine at famous local restaurants serving Lowcountry cuisine.



Tour Highlights

- Travel scenic Highway 17 through ACE Basin and enjoy the changing fall colors and unusual topography — salt marshes, cypress swamps, and live oak and longleaf pine forest
- Explore the Caw Caw Interpretive Center, searching for Bald Eagle, Wood Stork, Osprey, waterfowl, wading birds, otters, American Alligator, and deer (to name a few)
- Discover Savannah Wildlife Refuge, home to myriad bird and wildlife species, including Bobcat
- Learn the history of Gullah Sweetgrass baskets, one of the oldest African-based handcrafts in the U.S.
- Enjoy three days touring the Charleston area, one of North America's most architecturally-significant cities

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- Immerse yourself in the Charleston City Market, teeming with culture, local art, and mouthwatering foods
- Cruise the Charleston Harbor en route to Ft. Sumter and spot a variety of sea birds

Tour Summary

7-Day / 6-Night Coastal Tour with Pat Lueders & Local Guides

\$2250 from Savannah, Georgia, departing Charleston, SC

Arrival Airport is Savannah/Hilton Head International (SAV), Departure Airport is Charleston International (CHS)

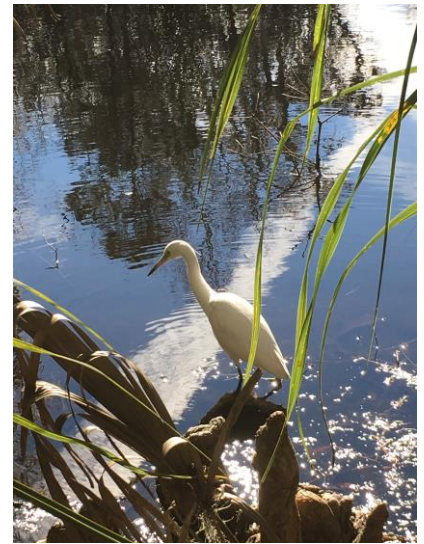
ITINERARY

Tues., October 18 Arrive in Historical Savannah, Georgia

Please plan to arrive at the Savannah International Airport by 2:00 PM. Savannah is the oldest city in Georgia, established in 1773, and was a strategic port city in both the American Revolution and the Civil War. We stay in the historic district with 22 park-like squares that retain the original town plan prescribed by founder James Oglethorpe. This evening we enjoy a walk on the riverfront and check into our centrally located hotel.

Our welcoming dinner location at a historical restaurant, and features local cuisine. After dinner we visit the many shops along the cobblestone streets.

Accommodations in Savannah (D)



Wed., October 19 Savannah National Wildlife Refuge / ACE Basin / Folly Beach



After breakfast, we have a bit more time to see more of downtown Savannah before leaving our hotel for Charleston.

This morning we tour the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, getting our first views of towering live oaks, wading birds, and American Alligator. The refuge is a short distance from Savannah, and is one of a chain of seven refuges that stretch 100 miles along the coastline, and feature fresh and saltwater marshes, tidal rivers and creeks, bottomland hardwoods, maritime forests, barrier island beaches, and more.

We drive the four-mile Wildlife Drive, the best place in South Carolina to find breeding Purple Gallinule. Common Gallinule, Wood Stork, Anhinga, Glossy and White Ibis, Tri-colored Heron, and Little Blue Heron can be seen here in the fall. We picnic at the beautiful refuge headquarters that features a garden of native and local plants.

We experience the natural diversity of the region as our route north takes us through the ACE Basin area of South Carolina. Covering 700,000 acres, the basin is composed of state, federal, and private land. ACE stands for Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto, which are three rivers that flow into St. Helena Sound, creating the basin. The variety of habitat in the basin provides chances for birds as varied as Black-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Mottled Duck, Clapper and Virginia Rail, and Prairie Warbler. The live oaks, marshes, and ponds offer excellent photo opportunities for alligator, deer, shorebirds, and nature.



We arrive at our beachside accommodations late in the afternoon after a fulfilling field day with great birding.



For dinner tonight, we walk to one of the charming local seafood restaurants. We watch the sunset from the Folly Beach Fishing Pier, which extends 1045' into the ocean, offering unique views of seabirds like Red-throated Loon and Black Scoter, birds that are hard to see from the beach.

Accommodations at the Tides Hotel, Folly Beach (B,L,D)



Thurs., October 20 Folly Beach Birding

Spend the next two days walking and birding charming Folly Beach, featuring the 1045' pier and delicious seafood caught just off shore.

After our ocean side breakfast, we visit the Folly Beach County Park, walking the beach to see Sanderling, Willet, Dunlin, Piping and Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Red Knot. The famous Folly Beach Pier offers close views of Royal, Caspian, and Forster's Terns, Laughing Gull, Black Scoter, Red-throated Loon, and Red-breasted Merganser.

After lunch in the charming village of Folly, we walk a short trail to view the Morris Island Lighthouse, watching for Seaside, Saltmarsh, and Nelson's Sparrows along the brush-lined paved road. The lighthouse was completed in 1876, and replaces the original one on Morris Island that is now surrounded by water.

Dinner is on your own this evening so you can shop or relax on the beach or at the pool.
Accommodations at the Tides Hotel, Folly Beach (B,L)

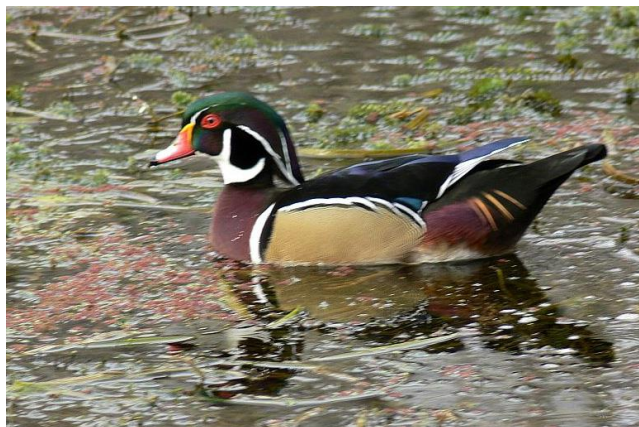
Fri., October 21 Travel to Caw Caw & Historical Charleston



This morning we get an early start, leaving Folly Island and visiting Caw Caw Interpretive Center, a 1046-acre site that was once part of several rice plantations in the early 1800s. This site's current habitat diversity is the main factor behind the diversity of wildlife seen at the park. Their exhibit center explores the roles of enslaved Africans during the South Carolina rice era.

We walk some of the trails and boardwalks, home to Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, Roseate Spoonbill, Common Gallinule, Tri-colored Heron, and American

Bittern. Many American Alligator also call this area home, as do River Otter and Bobcat.



After a picnic lunch at Caw Caw, we drive to Charleston, South Carolina, one of North America's most architecturally significant destinations. Our local guide provides us with a fascinating orientation to the area, visiting the downtown and bay street districts.



We then check into our bayside hotel with views of the Charleston Harbor, Bay, bridges, and marinas. Dinner tonight comes with a view of this beautiful seaside city.

Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)

Sat., October 22 Historical Charleston



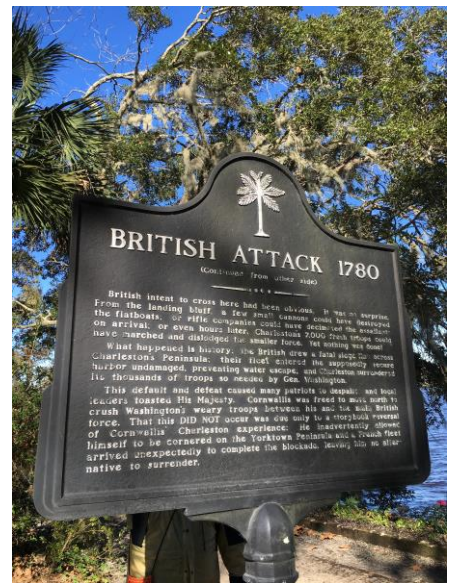
After breakfast, we spend the morning visiting Magnolia Plantation's Audubon Swamp Garden Trail looking for Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Anhinga, and numerous duck species. Located off of scenic Ashley River Road, their gardens are known as one of "America's Most Beautiful Gardens," the only garden with this distinction in the Palmetto State.

We tour the Magnolia Cabin Project before lunch, an effort which began ten years ago to preserve five historic structures, former dwellings of enslaved

West Africans that date back to 1850. During this tour, Magnolia recognizes the vital role that Gullah people and culture plays in any interpretation of Lowcountry history.

We spend the afternoon and evening visiting downtown historical Charleston, enjoying a boat ride to Ft. Sumter watching for seabirds and shorebirds on the beach at the monument, where decades of growing strife between North and South erupted in civil war in 1861. A horse-drawn carriage ride to visit antebellum homes and museums, a shopping stop at the City Market, and dinner at a local restaurant complete the day. We sleep well tonight after this exciting visit to downtown Charleston!

Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)



Sun., October 23 Audubon's Francis Beidler Forest Sanctuary



This morning we leave early for a day of birding, beginning at the Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Sanctuary, home to the Audubon South Carolina state office and a 1.7-mile-long boardwalk that leads into the heart of Four Holes Swamp. The boardwalk starts off in a mixed hardwood forest and continues into an old-growth hardwood swamp. Residents include Brown-headed Nuthatch, Barred Owl, Wild Turkey, and six species of woodpeckers. In addition to birds, the fallen logs and cypress stumps are habitat for snakes, turtles, and frogs. Also watch for Cottonmouth, American Alligator, White-

tailed Deer, Bobcat, Beaver, and River Otter during our walk.

we cross the Charleston Bay on the Ravenel Bridge to Mt. Pleasant and bird Patriots Point, Pitt Street Bridge, and the Ft. Moultrie area. Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher, Least Tern, Marsh Wren, and Common Ground Dove are found in this area.

On return, we cross the Charleston Bay on the Ravenel Bridge to Mt. Pleasant and bird Patriots Point, Pitt Street Bridge, and the Ft. Moultrie area. Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher, Least Tern, Marsh Wren, and Common Ground Dove are found in this area.

Our farewell dinner is at a local seafood restaurant in Shem Creek harbor where the boat that caught your shrimp or fish that morning is docked!

Accommodations in Charleston (B,L,D)

Mon., October 24 Departures from Charleson

This morning, before departing the city of Charleston, we enjoy a nice breakfast and a walk before returning to the airport.

While you may leave at the time you need to, to enjoy our last morning, plan on flights leaving Charleston after 11:00 AM, or if you wish to extend your visit, we can transport you to an airport hotel, or you can catch a taxi or shuttle to your destination from the airport. (B)



Ask us about Travel Insurance and Carbon Offset for your tour.

COST OF THE JOURNEY

The cost for this guided tour is \$2250 person, double occupancy, and \$2995 single occupancy.

INCLUDED: Six night's accommodations, all meals from dinner Day 1 through Breakfast Day 7 with the exception of one evening dinner at leisure, airport transfers, land and boat transportation during the journey, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

NOT INCLUDED: Round-trip airfare to and from either Charleston or Savannah, personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, and gratuities for luggage handling or other services.

TOUR NOTES & PACE: Dining: Casual. Pace: Moderate: days of birding and touring walks on established trails or roads, or on a beach. Typical walk will be from ½-2 miles at a leisurely rate.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Airports: ARRIVAL: Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, Savannah, Georgia. Airlines include American, Delta, & United. Plan to arrive no later than 2:00 pm on October 18. DEPARTURE: Charleston International Airport after 2:00 pm on October 24. Airlines include American, Delta, Southwest & United. Note, if you find round-trip Charleston to be a better fare for you based on airline selection, you can arrive a day early and travel down to Savannah with the guide, from Charleston.

GROUP SIZE & GUIDES: This is a birding, wildlife and history trip, with Pat Lueders and local guide Glenda Braxton-Brown in Charleston. There is a minimum of 4, maximum of 8 participants.

YOUR GUIDE



Pat Lueders started leading birding tours for St Louis Audubon in 2002, serving as their field trip coordinator. She has traveled throughout the U.S., Central, and South America as a tour guide and birder. Expanding into the area of citizen science, she has coordinated habitat surveys in the Midwest for U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Audubon Society. Since 2011, she has been the lead coordinator of the Great Rivers Trumpeter Swan Watch and has participated on a bird banding team since 2004. Since 2010, Pat has frequently visited and birded in South Carolina and looks forward to sharing this exciting destination with others. When home in St. Louis, she enjoys hiking, golf, and always birding.

Photo credits:

Page 1—Boat to Ft Sumter at the Fort's dock, Pat Lueders (PL); Great Egret and Woodstork, Peg Abbott (PA)

Page 2—Little Blue Heron at Magnolia Plantation, PL; Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, PL

Page 3—Ace Basin, courtesy of Ace Basin; Patio, Tides Folly Beach, PL ; Folly Beach Shorebirds, PL; Snowy Egret in waves, PA; Morris Island Lighthouse, PL

Page 4—Great Egret, Jim Schafer; Wood Duck, Richard Becker; Birders at Caw Caw , PL; Restaurant--Folly Beach, PL

Page 5—Magnolia Plantation, PL; Historical Sign, PL; Pileated Woodpecker, Tom Dove.

Page 6—Ravenal Bridge, PL; left--Ft Moultrie, PL; right-Ft Sumter, PL

Page 7—Pat Lueders --Lesley Davis