

WAYPOINTS

By Kim Purcell

Lowcountry Living

For families looking for a relaxing getaway, Charleston, S.C., is a historic seaside community that's filled with old-world charm.



Located between the Cooper and Ashley Rivers on the coast of South Carolina, Charleston is a scenic blend of antebellum residences, marsh and waterfront views, and plantations. Blessed with the nickname “The Holy City” because of its church-steeple skyline, its landscape has become synonymous with Charleston’s rich history and Lowcountry culture.

In the Historic District, majestic colonial and wrought-iron balcony antebellum homes fill the tree-lined, brick-paved streets that are just steps away from Charleston Harbor. Strolling down some of the oldest streets in town will lead to the Old City Market, an open-air bazaar where local vendors sell their goods. Authentic Lowcountry cuisine is abundant, with fresh seafood served in charming old-world establishments.

Just across the harbor, Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant hosts the world’s largest naval and maritime museum, home to the *USS Yorktown*. History buffs can jump on board historic wartime vessels or fighter planes, take a cruise around the Charleston Harbor, or set out by boat to Fort Sumter, the site of the first American Civil War battle.

Marinas are plentiful throughout the Charleston area, and most provide courtesy shuttles to the downtown area. For recreation, authentic shrimp docks just south of the city host some of the best family fishing and sightseeing tours around. For water action, families can visit parks, rent boats or kayaks, or visit the state’s largest aquarium. Nearby Isle of Palms is an excellent day excursion to the beach that also hosts world-class golf at the Wild Dunes Resort.



Charleston is a city built on history, with a gracious charm that’s infectious. It’s a thriving waterfront community and welcome port away from home.



offers charter boat services, complimentary trolley service to downtown attractions, and full access to Charleston Harbor Resort's amenities, including the use of the pool, Jacuzzi, fitness facility, and the Reel Bar and The Grille restaurant. Transient docking rates are \$1.95 per foot per day. (843) 284-7061, www.charlestonharbormarina.com.

perfect place for a romantic night out. The menu features an extensive wine selection and contemporary cuisine by Executive Chef Marc Collins, who creates Southern-style dishes made with a sophisticated twist. Specialties include broiled filet of lobster, crab cake souffle and spicy grilled shrimp over fried green tomatoes. (843) 853-7828, www.circa1886.com.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- **The Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina.** Awarded "Connoisseur's Choice" by *Resorts and Great Hotels* magazine, this harborfront resort combines Lowcountry culture with waterfront luxury. Guests can choose from standard rooms to deluxe suites with private balconies and views of Charleston Harbor. The Charleston Harbor Marina offers a full-service marina to guests, complete with fishing charters, sailing excursions and harbor tours. Notable resort services include a Mini Mariners children's program and water taxis to downtown attractions. (888) 856-0028, www.charlestonharborresort.com.

- **Wild Dunes Resort.** Located 20 minutes from downtown Charleston, this 1,600-acre oceanfront resort on the Isle of Palms has over two miles of oceanfront pools and beaches, world-class golf, tennis, and recreation programs, and four restaurants. Guests can stay at the Boardwalk Inn or choose from 350 beach homes and condominiums with exclusive access to amenities and services resort-wide, including two distinctive Tom Fazio-designed championship golf courses. The resort also offers complimentary shuttle service to the Isle of Palms Marina. (888) 778-1876, www.wilddunes.com; IOP Marina (843) 886-0209, www.isleofpalmsmarina.com.

MARINAS

- **Charleston City Marina.** Named 2005 National Marina of the Year by *Marina Dock Age Magazine*, the Charleston City Marina features 19,000 linear feet of dock space covering 40 acres of water. The marina's 1,530-foot MegaDock is the longest freestanding floating fuel dock in the Southeast and features hi-speed diesel pumps, shore power, a floating bathhouse with private showers, restrooms and laundry, and a courtesy van to downtown Charleston. Overnight moorage is \$2 per foot per night (30-foot minimum) and \$2.15 per foot per night for vessels 70 feet and over. (843) 723-5098, www.charlestoncitymarina.com.

- **Charleston Harbor Marina.** The largest marina in South Carolina, this full-service marina has 17,000 linear feet of floating dock space with 459 slips that accommodate a wide range of boat sizes, with fixed-pier boat lifts for smaller boats up to 9,500 pounds and the Breakwaters for vessels up to 200 feet. The King Fish Dock provides fuel and dockside services, including power, potable water, laundry and showering facilities. The marina

RESTAURANTS

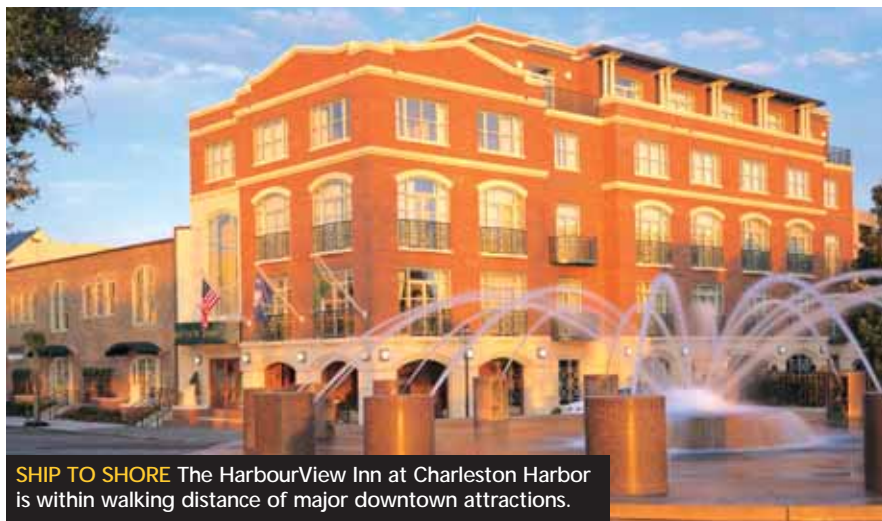
- **A.W. Shucks Seafood Restaurant.** Located in The Market area in a historic warehouse — well-known by the locals as the old Nabisco cracker company that transformed into a Speakeasy — this oyster raw bar and restaurant serves traditional Charleston-style seafood and Cajun dishes, including its award-winning Lowcountry she-crab soup and seafood casserole, fresh seafood specials, and raw oysters year-round. (843) 723-1151, www.a-w-shucks.com.

- **Shem Creek Bar and Grill.** Set along the banks of Shem Creek, this laid-back seafood "shack" is a favorite with the locals. The best tables are in the "back of the house," which overlooks the creek and dockside bar. Boaters can dock out back and enter directly into the dock section. The menu is extensive and delicious, with platters of fresh local seafood and Lowcountry specialties. (843) 884-8102, www.shemcreekbarandgrill.com.

- **Circa 1886.** Situated in the gardens behind the Wentworth Mansion off King Street and housed in an historic carriage house, this elegant establishment is the



WAYPOINTS



SHIP TO SHORE The HarbourView Inn at Charleston Harbor is within walking distance of major downtown attractions.

• **HarbourView Inn.** Overlooking Charleston Harbor and Waterfront Park, the HarbourView Inn is located within walking distance of historic downtown Charleston's Old City Market, world-renowned restaurants, Antique Row and boutique shopping. Guests can choose from rooms with private balconies, fireplaces and whirlpool tubs, and enjoy a complimentary wine and cheese reception, and turn-down service. The resort offers a "Ship to Shore" package that includes a two-day docking permit for guests with boats up to 45 feet. (888) 853-8439, www.harbourviewinncharleston.com.

LANDMARKS

• **Fort Sumter National Monument.** A not-to-be-missed tour of American history, Fort Sumter commemorates the historic spot where the North and South erupted into civil war in the harbor on April 12, 1861. The monument can be reached by private boat or ferry, with concessionaire ferries departing from Liberty Square in Charleston and Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant. (843) 883-3123, <http://www.nps.gov/fosu/>.

• **Morris Island Lighthouse.** Located off Folly Beach on a barrier island, the lighthouse is recognized as one of the top 100 cultural sites in the state of South Carolina by the Heritage Trust Program Board. Originally constructed 1,200 feet on shore, the 123-year-old lighthouse now stands on only 80 acres of submerged land. (843) 556-0353, www.savethelight.org.

• **Patriots Point.** Home of the famous *USS Yorktown*, families can tour the massive 888-foot aircraft carrier on display at the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum — the largest museum of its kind — which also features historic planes from World War II and Korea, and aircraft from the Vietnam War and Desert Storm. The museum also exhibits the destroyer *USS Laffey*, Coast Guard cutter *Ingham*, submarine *Clamagor*, and the Congressional Medal of Honor Museum and Cold War Submarine Memorial. (866) 831-1720, www.patriotspoint.org.

CULTURAL

• **Old City Market.** Built in 1841, the Market Street between Meeting and East Bay streets in the Historic District is one of the oldest streets on the Eastern seaboard. It features small shops, restaurants, horse-drawn carriage tours and the famous Old City Market, an open-air flea market with local vendors who sell everything from produce to antiques.

• **Magnolia Plantation and Gardens.** Founded by the Drayton family in 1676, this pre-revolutionary estate features America's oldest gardens, which are maintained in full bloom year-round. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, the estate has 50 acres of lawn and gardens, including one of the largest collections of azaleas and camellias. It also has an antebellum cabin, nature train and boat for kids, wildlife observation tower and canoe rentals. (800) 367-3517, www.magnoliaplantation.com.

FAST FACTS

POPULATION: 330,368.

WEATHER: Charleston has temperate conditions, from lows in the 30s in January to highs in the 80s in July.

TRIVIA: The palmetto tree has been a symbol of South Carolina since June 28, 1776, when America had its first Revolutionary War victory over the British navy at Fort Moultrie, which was built of palmetto logs.

HISTORY: Settled in 1670, Charleston grew to become one of the South's main ports during the American Civil War, and it's also the site of the Battle of Fort Sumter, which started the war.

TOURIST INFO: For more information, visit the Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau at www.charleston-cvb.com or call (800) 774-0006.



ACTIVITIES

• **Bohicket Boat: Adventure & Tour Co.** Located 30 minutes south of downtown at Cherry Point Seafood on Wadmalaw Island, Bohicket Boat hosts guided tours from a shrimp dock and commercial fishing pier. Families can rent boats and kayaks or take a family tour that combines fishing, crabbing and beachcombing. Dolphin and sunset cruises, inshore and offshore fishing, shrimp boat tours, and private sea-island excursions are available. (843) 559-3525, www.bohicketboat.com.

• **South Carolina Aquarium.** The largest aquarium in the state, it's home to more than 10,000 plants and animals including river otters, sea turtles and alligators. The largest exhibit tank, The Great Ocean Tank, holds more than 385,000 gallons of water with over 300 animals. The aquarium also features a Discovery Lab, where kids can touch horseshoe crabs, starfish and other marine animals. (843) 577-FISH, www.scaquarium.org 