

2010 African American History 5-Day Itinerary

South Carolina's African American history began with the first boat of English settlers from Barbados who founded the Carolina Colony at what is now Charleston. There were slaves on that ship, the first of countless thousands to follow.

South Carolina continued to play a key role in African American history through the rise of the rice and cotton barons and Gullah-Geechie culture, the Civil War, Reconstruction, segregation and the Civil Rights era on to today.

Below is a five-day itinerary that offers a look at just some of the state's African American heritage and history. An equally extensive trip could be made across South Carolina without reaching the coast, as nearly every town and city has deep African American history and connections. Be sure to check online or by phone with your specific destination to verify the days and hours of operation before making final plans.

Day 1: The Lowcountry: Beaufort Arsenal Museum, Robert Smalls House, Penn Center, Mitchelville, Daufuskie Island

Day 2: Downtown Charleston: Old Slave Mart & Museum, Gullah Tour, Avery Research Center, Emanuel AME Church.

Day 3: Plantation Charleston: Charles Towne Landing, Magnolia Plantation, Middleton Place, Drayton Hall.

Day 4: The Rice Culture: Sullivan's Island, Boone Hall, Sweet Grass Stands, Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, Rice Museum, Gullah O'oman Museum and Shop.

Day 5: The Capital City: Mann-Simons Cottage, Modjeska Simkins House, Big Apple, African-American Monument, South Carolina State Museum.

Itinerary Details

Day 1: See the Sea Islands: First, the [Beaufort Arsenal and Museum](#), built in 1798 and first garrisoned by an African American militia unit. Later it was one of the first polling places for freed slaves. See the [home](#) of [Robert Smalls](#), an enslaved boat captain who commandeered his ship during the Civil War, launching a career that saw him later become a Union war hero and then a congressman. Then to St. Helena Island and the [Penn Center](#), first school for freed slaves and later a planning retreat for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his colleagues, now a center of Gullah culture and history. Over to Hilton Head Island then and check out [Mitchelville](#), where earthworks and an historic marker are what remain of what was a Union fort near where escaped slaves later established one of the first freedmen's villages. Take a [ferry](#) over to Daufuskie Island for a look around and a visit to [First Union African Baptist Church](#), built by freed slaves and a spiritual center for the Gullah culture that remains on the isolated sea island.

Eating and Sleeping: Research your many options at www.beaufortsc.org, www.hiltonheadisland.org or www.southcarolinalowcountry.com.

Day 2: Historic Charleston. Tour the [Old Slave Mart and Museum](#), built in 1852 for the domestic slave trade, shut down in 1863 and opened as a museum in 2007 as possibly the only known slave auction gallery building still in existence in the state. Buy sweet grass baskets from Gullah basket makers in and around the [City Market](#), built between 1804 and the 1830s. See more sites of black history in Charleston, including the home of slave rebellion leader [Denmark Vesey](#), on the [Gullah Tour](#), which embarks in a van parked outside [Gallery Chuma](#), closely associated with renowned Gullah artist Jonathan Green. Visit the oldest AME church in the South, [Emanuel AME](#), or “Mother Emanuel”, where Vesey had served as a lay preacher. Learn more in the galleries and exhibits at the College of Charleston’s [Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture](#).

Eating and Sleeping: Research your many options at www.explorecharleston.com.

Day 3: Plantation Roots. See where it all began at [Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site](#), where a group of English planters, indentured servants and slaves landed in 1670 at what would become Charleston and a birthplace of the plantation system of the American South. Then head up the Ashley River and explore the [genealogical records](#), slave cabins, cemeteries, exhibits, original landscaped gardens (the first in the country) and other slave-built works at nationally renowned [Drayton Hall](#), [Middleton Place](#) and [Magnolia Plantation](#).

Eating and Sleeping: Research your many options at www.explorecharleston.com.

Day 4: King Rice. Before cotton, there was rice, first made possible by the knowledge of West Africans snatched from their homes and then by their backbreaking labor and that of those who followed. Visit Sullivan’s Island, “slavery’s Ellis Island”, where an estimated 40 percent of enslaved Africans first landed in America before 1775. Ponder the story in the new exhibit at [Fort Moultrie](#). See the brick slave cabins at 300-year-old [Boone Hall](#). Then head up U.S. 17, watching for sweet grass basket makers at their stands. Stop at [Hampton Plantation State Historic Site](#), see the long-abandoned rice fields and learn about the lives of the freed slaves and their descendants who lived there long after Emancipation. And then visit the [Rice Museum](#) in Georgetown and over the Winyah Bay to the [Gullah O’oman Museum and Gift Shop](#) on Pawleys Island.

Eating and Sleeping: Research your many options at www.visitgeorge.com.

Day 5: A Capital Conclusion. Drive inland to Columbia and visit the [Mann-Simons Cottage](#), one of the few houses in South Carolina once owned by antebellum freed slaves and their descendants (in this case until the 1970s.) See the home of [Modjeska Simkins](#), a matriarch of the Civil Rights movement in South Carolina who provided lodging and meeting space to NAACP leaders and attorneys such as Thurgood Marshall. Check out

the [Big Apple](#), a former synagogue that became a dance hall where the dance of that name was popularized by African Americans before it became a national craze in 1937. Visit the moving [African-American Monument](#), unveiled in 2001 on the State House grounds. It traces African American history from the Middle Passage, to the fight for freedom in the Civil War, the struggle for civil rights and emergence into mainstream America. Spend some time in the [African American history collection](#) of the [South Carolina State Museum](#).

Eating and Sleeping: Research your many options at www.columbiacvb.com.

Where to stay, what to eat ...

Each of the destinations on this itinerary offers a wide range of dining and overnight accommodations options. Continue your online exploration at www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com.