

## **2010 Columbia 4-Day Itinerary**

Columbia is in the center of the state of South Carolina for good reason. Leaders from the Upstate and the Lowcountry agreed in 1786 that the wooded site on the bluff above the Congaree River would be the capital of the new state, one of the 13 original colonies that had just won their freedom from England.

Now Columbia thrives as a mix of state, military and university, with history and nature and culture providing visitors a lot to do in a short amount of time and without much driving.

Here is a sample itinerary for the Columbia area. For more recommendations, visit [www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com](http://www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com), [www.LakeMurrayCountry.com](http://www.LakeMurrayCountry.com) or [www.columbiacvb.com](http://www.columbiacvb.com).

**Day 1:** Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Three Rivers Greenway, the State House, the Vista and Five Points for galleries, shopping and dining.

**Day 2:** EdVenture Children's Museum, S.C. State Museum, S.C. Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum, Columbia Museum of Art.

**Day 3:** Congaree National Park, S.C. State Farmers Market, Lake Murray.

**Day 4:** The homes of the Historic Columbia Foundation, the University of South Carolina, Fort Jackson.

### **Details, Details ...**

Visiting the state's capital is a must! Columbia is home to the largest children's museum in the South, an internationally regarded zoo, the University of South Carolina and the U.S. Army's largest basic training facility. With the Vista and Five Points located in downtown Columbia, it's also a great place to enjoy nightlife. Be sure to check online or by phone with your specific destination to verify days and hours of operation before making final plans.

**Day 1:** First on the list for many visitors to Columbia is internationally regarded [Riverbanks Zoo & Garden](#), home to thousands of animals and plants from around the world. A compact facility, it's on the banks of the Saluda River, just above its confluence with the Broad River (and the resulting Congaree River). Those three are lined by the [Three Rivers Greenway](#) and its nearly 10 miles of paved, popular walking trails. There are also [outfitters](#) who can take you paddling through the rocky shoals and open flows, via kayak, canoe and even inner tubes.

Follow that up with a stop at the [State House](#). The grand, historic old building is open daily except Sunday for guided tours, and the grounds themselves also are worth a walk, to check out the gorgeous old trees and moving monuments. And, of course, note the

brass stars on the side of the building. They were left by cannon shots from Gen. William T. Sherman's troops when the city was taken during the dying days of the Civil War in 1865.

Then it's off to the [Vista](#), the revived warehouse district just above the river that's home to more than 60 nightclubs, trendy restaurants and boutiques and art galleries. It's an eclectic mix of old and new, including a popular Publix grocery store housed in what once was a Confederate money printing plant. Another choice is [Five Points](#), the bar/restaurant/shopping neighborhood that's family friendly by day and popular with the student set at night.

**Day 2:** Visiting Columbia's museums can be a day-long affair. The younger set won't want to miss [EdVenture Children's Museum](#), the largest children's museum in the South and home to Eddie, the 40-foot-tall (sitting down) kid who's ready for fun and exploration. It's adjacent to the [South Carolina State Museum](#). Housed in an 1893 textile mill, the State Museum tells South Carolina's story through its cultural and natural history, art, science and technology. Under the same roof is Columbia's oldest museum, the [S.C. Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum](#). It pays homage to the state's martial tradition from the Revolutionary War to today. A few blocks away is the [Columbia Museum of Art](#), with its international collection of old masters and rising stars.

**Day 3:** The continent's largest remaining old-growth floodplain forest is just a half-hour drive from downtown Columbia. [Congaree National Park](#) contains a number of state- and national-record trees. There's a 2.4-mile boardwalk loop along with nearly 20 miles of other trails, as well as paddling opportunities and primitive campsites. Free, ranger-guided tours are offered nearly every weekend. On the way back downtown, swing by the brand-new [S.C. State Farmers Market](#). Open in spring 2010, the expansive new market includes produce and plants, and a whole lot more, including an amphitheater, demonstration kitchen and specialty food shops. A great way to end the day would be a boat ride on big Lake Murray. The 47,000-acre reservoir is home to national bass fishing tournaments and the biggest known rookery of purple martins in North America. Summer is when they gather on Bomb Island and swirl in such numbers that they show up on the weather radar at nearby Columbia Metropolitan Airport. A great way to see the lake is with a guide, a rental boat or one of the [cruise boats](#) that ply its waters.

**Day 4:** A relaxing day around town would be a good way to end a great week in South Carolina's capital city. Check out the past at the historic houses of the [Historic Columbia Foundation](#) – including the boyhood home of President Woodrow Wilson, classic mansions by famed architect Robert Mills of Washington Monument fame, an antebellum free black family's homestead and the home of civil rights leader Modjeska Simkins. There's even the Big Apple, once a synagogue and then a dance hall that gave birth to the dance craze of the same name and now a meeting facility and historic landmark. A walk around the Horseshoe at the 200-year-old [University of South Carolina](#) would be a nice follow up, and perhaps a lecture or performance at one of the historic old school's various venues. Another option is [Fort Jackson](#), one of the U.S. Army's largest basic training

facilities. Weekly graduation ceremonies and a military museum provide for inspiring sights.

***Where to stay, what to eat ...***

Columbia offers a wide range of hotel accommodations, including most of the major chains. Options include along the major interstates, downtown (including a Sheraton in a restored bank building that now includes a bar in a vault), in the Vista nightclub and bar district and boutique hotels near the university. Ample dining options from traditional barbecue and “meat and three” restaurants to trendy new American cuisine also are available, as are a wide range of ethnic eateries. More information:

[www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com](http://www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com), [www.columbiacvb.com](http://www.columbiacvb.com),  
[www.lakemurraycountry.com](http://www.lakemurraycountry.com).