

2010 Lowcountry 4-Day Itinerary

The Lowcountry in South Carolina is defined in different ways, but in this case, here's a suggested itinerary for exploration of the Spanish moss-draped, marsh-lined region of South Carolina from Edisto Island south to Hilton Head and inland to Interstate 95.

This is just a sample of all there is to do in this area rich in cultural and natural history, whose remote beauty and fertility attracted Spanish explorers, British settlers and then planters and their slaves who gave rise to the Gullah culture that lives on today. For more recommendations, visit www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com, www.beaufortsc.org, www.downtownbeaufort.com, www.hiltonheadisland.org or www.southcarolinalowcountry.com.

Day 1: Edisto Island, Walterboro

Day 2: Beaufort

Day 3: Hunting Island, St. Helena Island

Day 4: Hilton Head, Bluffton

Details, Details ...

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: Drive into the past off U.S. 17 onto S.C. 174 and take the newly designated [Edisto Island National Scenic Byway](#) through moss-draped live oaks, marshes and farm fields to the Atlantic Ocean. Sights worth seeing include the 300-year-old [Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island](#), [Edisto Island Museum](#), farm markets and sweet grass basket stands. Check out the ACE Basin Environmental Education Center, miles of handicapped-accessible trails through the maritime forest and uncrowded beach at [Edisto Beach State Park](#). Then make the interesting drive back to the mainland and over to historic Walterboro. Antique shops downtown are a highlight, as are the [South Carolina Artisans Center](#), featuring the works of some 250 juried artists and artisans, and the 842-acre [Great Swamp Sanctuary](#). An excellent overview of the entire Lowcountry and Sea Islands area is in the restored [Frampton House](#) Lowcountry Visitor's Center and Museum just off I-95 at Exit 33.

Day 2: On the way to Beaufort, stop at the evocative ruins of the 1740s [Old Sheldon Church](#). Then spend the day in [Historic Beaufort](#), relaxing on the picturesque riverfront and shopping and dining on Bay Street, like the rest of the [downtown](#), a registered National Historic District. Historic. Don't miss nearby [Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island](#) and its museum, as well as the site of Santa Elena, the Spanish-French settlement dating to the late 1500s. Learn about the environment, including some hands-on fun, at the [Lowcountry Estuarium](#).

Day 3: The sea islands on U.S. 21 across the river from Beaufort are a day trip themselves. Begin on St. Helena Island at the [Penn Center](#), home of the first school for freed slaves in the South and later a meeting place for Martin Luther King Jr. and his colleagues, and now a center of Gullah life. Check out the 1740s [Chapel of Ease](#) churchyard and ruins. Check out the [Gullah diners](#) and [art galleries](#) along the road. Explore [Hunting Island State Park](#), with more than three miles of semi-tropical beach, fishing pier in an ocean inlet, hiking in the lush forest, paddling in the marsh and lagoon and last but not least, scaling the 175-foot lighthouse, the only publicly accessible historic lighthouse in the state, for an unforgettable view of the South Carolina coast.

Day 4: [Hilton Head Island](#) has been a nationally renowned golf, tennis and beach destination for decades and [Bluffton](#), its mainland neighbor, has grown in popularity in recent years with its own village charm and art district. [Waterfront casual and high-end dining favorites](#) are among the more than 250 or so restaurants. [High-end boutiques and outlet malls alike](#) are tucked away behind the trees. There are also about 50 miles of public bike and nature trails for those who want to get out of the car and experience the island up close. Check out Hilton Head's past, including the origins and traditions of the Gullah community and a 500-year-old cedar tree, at the [Coastal Discovery Museum](#) and old Honey Horn Plantation. Give the kids a break at [Sandbox, an Interactive Children's Museum](#).

Where to stay, what to eat ...

Favorite seafood stops abound in the Lowcountry and accommodations range from the unique marsh front [Palm Key](#) artists colony and retreat to classic old inns in downtown Beaufort to oceanfront condo and high-rise luxury hotel stays on Hilton Head Island. Continue your online exploration of Beaufort, Hilton Head and other Lowcountry destinations at visit www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com, www.beaufortsc.org, www.downtownbeaufort.com, www.hiltonheadisland.org or www.southcarolinalowcountry.com.