

Charleston Trips

Trip 1: Honeymoon, May 2003

- Food
 - Hyman's Seafood / Aaron's Deli
 - Ok, a little expensive, nothing fantastic
 - <http://www.hymanseafood.com/>
 - Bubba Gump Shrimp Company
 - Very good, fun atmosphere
 - <http://www.bubbagump.com/>
 - T-Bonz Gill & Grill on the Market
 - Great burgers!
 - <http://www.tbonz.com/Tgill.asp?catID=1863>
 - The Trawler at Shem Creek
 - Too expensive, food just ok, VERY strong drinks
 - Sticky Fingers in Mt. Pleasant
 - Great lunch menu (1/2 rack ribs for \$6), wonderful food
 - <http://www.stickyfingers.net/>
 - Southend Brewery
 - Ok, a little expensive for what you got
 - <http://www.southendbrewery.com/>
 - Poogan's Porch
 - Fantastic breakfast
 - <http://www.poogansporch.com/>
- Activities
 - Visitor's Center
 - Definitely good first stop, some museum items, lots of brochures and coupons, 45 minute movie on history of Charleston, gift shop
 - <http://www.charlestoncvb.com/visitors/index.html>
 - Harbor Tour with Spiritline Cruises
 - Very nice, good breeze, great history
 - <http://www.spiritlinecruises.com/>
 - Patriot's Point (Yorktown)
 - Ok, neat to see ships, good value for the money
 - <http://www.patriotspoint.org/>
 - Ghost & Dungeon Walking Tour
 - Had a teenage guide who was VERY unenthusiastic, so not great overall, hearing some of the history was nice, Provost Dungeon would be better seen during the day
 - <http://www.bulldogtours.com/>
 - Market Street
 - Fun, neat shops and restaurants
 - Waterfront Park
 - Beautiful fountains, view of harbor, swings on pier
 - Battery & Whitepoint Gardens
 - View of harbor, beautiful houses, neat history

- Morris Island Lighthouse
 - Neat, long walk to get to it though
 - <http://www.savethelight.org/>
- Folly Beach
 - Large beach, looks nice (we just walked on it, didn't swim)
 - <http://www.follybeach.com/>
- Isle of Palms
 - Beautiful, clean beach, neat shops and restaurants, very nice
 - <http://www.isle-of-palms.sc.us/>
- Spoleto Festival
 - Lots of artsy stuff going on, we didn't participate in any of it other than walking through some displays near Francis Marion hotel
 - <http://www.spoletousa.org/>
- Lodging
 - Shem Creek Inn
 - Corner king room, very nice, garden tub, wraparound balcony overlooking Shem Creek, micro-fridge
 - <http://www.shemcreekinn.com/>

Trip 2: With Bo & Darnell, April 2005

- Food
 - One-Eyed Parrot at Isle of Palms
 - Good food, a little expensive, nice view of ocean from table, very tropical theme
 - <http://www.diningatwatersedge.com/>
 - T-Bonz Gill & Grill in Mt. Pleasant
 - Pretty good, better food last trip on the market
 - <http://www.tbonz.com/Tgill.asp?catID=1863>
 - Bubba Gump Shrimp Company
 - Very good again
 - <http://www.bubbagump.com/>
 - Sticky Fingers in Mt. Pleasant
 - Very good again
 - <http://www.stickyfingers.net/>
 - Poogan's Porch
 - Very good again
 - <http://www.poogansporch.com/>
- Activities
 - Visitor's Center
 - Again a good first stop
 - <http://www.charlestoncvb.com/visitors/index.html>
 - Fort Sumter Tour
 - Neat history, fairly short time actually spent at the fort but there's not a whole lot to do there
 - <http://www.nps.gov/fosu/>
 - Market Street

- Nice again
 - Waterfront Park
 - Nice again
 - Battery & Whitepoint Gardens
 - Nice again
 - Old South Carriage Tour
 - Very nice, fantastic guide, very interesting history of Charleston
 - <http://www.oldsouthcarriagetours.com/>
- Lodging
 - Shem Creek Inn
 - Double queen room, no micro-fridge (turns out you have to request one), small bathroom, not nearly as good an experience as last trip
 - <http://www.shemcreekinn.com/>

Trip 3: Memorial Day Weekend, May 2006

- Food
 - The Noisy Oyster on Johns Island
 - Nice view, food wasn't anything spectacular
 - <http://www.noisyoysterseafood.com/>
 - T-Bonz Gill & Grill on the Market
 - Excellent burger again
 - <http://www.tbonzgillandgrill.com/>
 - Bubba Gump Shrimp Company
 - Good as always, however they took Ron's favorite item off the menu
 - <http://www.bubbagump.com/>
 - Gilligan's Steamer & Raw Bar on Johns Island
 - Absolutely fantastic food and excellent service, best hush puppies EVER and they sell the mix so you can make your own
 - <http://www.gilligans.net/>
- Activities
 - Angel Oak
 - Awe-inspiring, great value (free), small gift shop was nice
 - <http://www.ci.charleston.sc.us/dept/content.aspx?nid=1027>
 - Jim Booth Gallery
 - Beautiful paintings and prints, many of his original works on display, had the opportunity to meet the artist, lovely just to browse
 - <http://www.jimbooth.com/>
 - Old South Carriage Tour
 - Very nice again, guide not quite as good as last trip, but still a pleasant experience overall
 - <http://www.oldsouthcarriagetours.com/>
 - Market Street
 - Nice again
 - Folly Beach

- Took a morning walk with Murphy, very enjoyable and lots of shells
 - <http://www.follybeach.com/>
 - Boone Hall Farms Produce Shop
 - Strawberries were just ok, but they had the BEST fresh shrimp
 - <http://www.boonehallfarms.com/>
- Lodging
 - Oak Plantation Campground on Johns Island
 - Very nice, beautiful area, small pool was very enjoyable, wonderful dog run, large shaded sites, near brand new Wal-mart and some dining
 - <http://www.oakplantationcampground.com/>

Trip 4: Memorial Day Weekend, May 2007, with my parents, sister, and Ron's parents

- Food
 - Gilligan's Steamer & Raw Bar on Johns Island
 - Excellent again, everyone seemed to think this was the best meal of the trip
 - <http://www.gilligans.net/>
 - A.W. Shuck's on the Market
 - Great food and excellent service, our waiter brought us a free shrimp dip (even though we didn't have a coupon for it). Their lunch selections were very reasonably priced. This was also the only restaurant that let us use their "\$3 Off Lunch/\$5 Off Dinner" coupons for each of our three parties at the table instead of stipulating that only one coupon could be used per table.
 - <http://www.a-w-shucks.com>
 - The Noisy Oyster on the Market
 - Food was decent, service was HORRIBLE. This makes 2 strikes against the Noisy Oyster (this is the second location I've tried). There are too many other restaurants in Charleston for me ever waste my time there again.
 - <http://www.noisyoysterseafood.com/>
 - Charleston Crab House on James Island
 - Beautiful waterfront view of the Ashley River
 - Food and service were both good. We had a few people in our group that preferred non-seafood items, and this restaurant had the least options for them of all the places we ate at on the trip.
 - <http://www.charlestoncrabhouse.com/>
- Activities
 - Carolina Polo Carriage Tour
 - Enjoyed it just as much as Old South, our guide was fun and did a great job. I really liked that he pointed out photo opportunities along the tour to keep us from missing some of the great shots. We had one person too many for a private carriage tour, but they can

do a private tour for up to 6 people for \$100. The private tour is definitely on my wish list.

- <http://www.cpcc.com/>
- Visitor's Center
 - A good first stop again. We enjoyed browsing the brochures, coupons, and gift shop. They've just opened an interactive model of Charleston when you first come in the door that was really neat.
 - <http://www.charlestoncvb.com/visitors/index.html>
- Confederate Museum on the Market
 - This was an unplanned stop on our visit to Charleston, but it was one that everyone enjoyed. Admission was only \$5 per person and there was a lot to see. It's one room upstairs at the start of the market, but it was packed with Civil War era clothing, flags, books, paintings, a canon, and all kinds of assorted artifacts. If you're a history buff at all, you'll enjoy this.
 - <http://www.csa-scla.org/articles/ConfederateMuseum.htm>
- Market Street, Waterfront Park, etc.
 - All nice again. We really enjoyed taking a break at Waterfront Park to swing on the bench swings on the pier and wade in the pineapple fountain.
- Magnolia Plantation
 - We did the house tour, nature tram, and self-guided garden tour. We also enjoyed the petting zoo (my favorite part). The animals were beautiful and very friendly (except for one very greedy sheep that chased us all around to make sure he got his share of the food). The peacocks put on a show and they had white-tailed deer that would eat out of your hand. The house tour was ok, but short. If you're pressed for time or money, I'd skip it, you really wouldn't miss anything. The nature tram was great and I would highly recommend it. The guide was really good about stopping to allow us to stand up and move around a little bit to take pictures. The gardens were beautiful, but mostly just green. I would love to come back a little earlier in the season to see the azaleas blooming as they were pretty much finished by this late in May. They did have lots of summer flowers out, it just wasn't the profusion of colors like you see in their early spring photos. I can see us coming back here again as it was very enjoyable.
 - One note, we ate at the Peacock Café on the Plantation just because we ended up running a little late past lunch time before we were anywhere near ready to leave. The food was ok, but very expensive (\$7.50 for a ham or chicken salad sandwich, \$4 for a hotdog, \$2.50 each for a small bag of chips or a drink). I wish we had packed a picnic lunch and brought it with us as that would have been very nice and much, much cheaper. We'll probably do that the next time.
 - <http://www.magnoliaplantation.com/>

- Haunted Jail Tour with Bulldog Tours
 - Very enjoyable, probably more historical than spooky, but still a lot of fun. Our tour guide, Suzanne, was very knowledgeable and theatrical. I would recommend asking to be on her tour, if possible. We got to the jail a little early and were able to get some great shots of the outside.
 - We were at the market before walking to the jail, so we parked in a garage that was in-between. I highly recommend just driving to the jail and parking there. There was plenty of space and the tour company will tell you exactly where to go when you pick up your tickets.
 - <http://bulldogtours.com/>
- Angel Oak
 - Awe-inspiring again. This is a definite must-see, and it's free, so you really can't beat it. If you're not staying on this side of Charleston (Johns Island) and are having a hard time justifying crossing the Ashley River just for this, then use this as a stopping point and then head down to Folly Beach while you're here.
 - <http://www.ci.charleston.sc.us/dept/content.aspx?nid=1027>
- Isle of Palms
 - I could not believe this was the same beach that we had visited before. I'm not sure what had changed, but the beach was packed with people, covered in trash and debris, and nothing like it had been when Ron and I visited on our honeymoon. We sat in traffic trying to get there and then had a very frustrating time trying to find somewhere to park as just about all of the lots were full. We didn't stay long and ended up riding over to Sullivan's Island to avoid having to sit in the miles of traffic back-up across the IOP connector. We passed some nice beach areas that weren't crowded at all over on Sullivan's Island. There were numerous public beach access points, but it might be tough to find somewhere to park. It would be worth it to avoid some of the crowds we saw on the beach at IOP. We'll explore this further on our next trip.
 - <http://www.isle-of-palms.sc.us/>
- Lodging
 - Oak Plantation Campground on Johns Island
 - Very nice again, we had an end site which meant that there wasn't another camper directly in front of us which allowed us to have quite a bit more room in our site. Will probably request an end site for the next trip.
 - <http://www.oakplantationcampground.com/>

Trip 4: Memorial Day Weekend, May 2008, just Ron and I on our "Baby-moon"

- Food
 - Gilligan's Steamer & Raw Bar on Johns Island

- Good, but they would only bring us 5 or 6 hush puppies at a time, so that was a little aggravating
 - <http://www.gilligans.net/>
 - Ye Ole Fashioned Ice Cream & Sandwich Café
 - <http://www.yeolefashioned.com/>
 - Huge burgers and fries, didn't try the ice cream
 - Tootie's Sidewalk Café and Ice Cream Parlor
 - <http://www.tootiessidewalkcafe.com/>
 - Not at all impressed with ice cream
 - Closed now
 - California Dreaming
 - <http://www.newyorkprime.com/califdreaming/cd-charleston/cdcharles-intro.html>
 - Good food and beautiful view! There was a little bit of a wait and the tables were somewhat crowded together. Reservations are recommended.
 - Sticky Fingers
 - Delicious as always. The peach cobbler (free with a coupon) was fantastic.
 - T-Bonz Gill & Grill
 - Double fried wings. If you go there, you must order them. That's all I need to say.
 - Citidel Mall
 - Nice selection of shops, not far from the campground.
 - Fishnet Seafood (3832 Savannah Hwy, Johns Island)
 - Ok, we didn't get anything cooked there, just got some raw shrimp to cook ourselves. It was fine, nothing spectacular.
 - <http://www.roadfood.com/Reviews/Overview.aspx?RefID=1405>
 - America's Top 10 Seafood Shacks by Epicurious.com - http://www.epicurious.com/restaurants/best_eats/seafood
- Activities
 - I was 7 months pregnant on this trip (and ended up having Dillon 1 month later at 8 months) and enormous. So we really didn't do much. We wandered around Charleston in the evenings after it had cooled off a little, ate lots of ice cream, and went to the movies. All in all, very relaxing.
- Lodging
 - Oak Plantation Campground on Johns Island
 - Very nice again, we had another end site and it was very nice.
 - This campground doesn't really have much for kids, just a couple of swings and a monkey-bar type thing. I'm guessing once Dillon gets here we'll probably check out the James Island campground instead.
 - <http://www.oakplantationcampground.com/>

Trip 5: Memorial Day Weekend, May 2009, with my parents and Dillon (review in progress, I'll update it soon!)

- Food
 - Gilligan's Steamer & Raw Bar on Johns Island
 - Very good, as usual. Mom, Dad, and I all got pina coladas served in real coconuts, so that was fun.
 - <http://www.gilligans.net/>
 - The Buccaneer
 - <http://www.thebuccaneerrestaurant.com/>
 - FANTASTIC! Possible the best food and service we've ever had in Charleston and there was NO WAIT! Amazing! Highly recommended!
 - High Cotton
 - <http://www.mavericksouthernkitchens.com/highcotton/>
 - Ron and I ate here for our anniversary dinner. The steaks were wonderful. I told them it was our anniversary when I made the reservation and they gave us a corner table by the window (very nice for people watching and somewhat private) and free dessert. We both agreed that we would like to go back on our next visit.
 - East Bay Crab Shack (in historic Charleston)
 - <http://www.crabshacks.com/>
 - The restaurant keeps large doors and windows open to the street, so it was fairly warm in the restaurant. This is not the place if you're looking for some air-conditioned comfort out of the heat.
 - Food was ok, but pricey for what we got. Mine and Ron's food cost more here than it did at High Cotton. We did order mixed drinks here and not there, but still, I was a little put off by how expensive it was. I got the Monkey something drink, it wasn't good at all and I wouldn't get it again.
 - T-Bonz Gill & Grill on Market St
 - Excellent again. Our server even had some coupons that he gave to us. Don't forget to get the double fried wings!
 - <http://www.tbonz.com/Tgill.asp?catID=1863>
- Activities
 - SC Aquarium
 - <http://www.scaquarium.org/>
 - Wonderful, and Dillon LOVED it. We'll probably be coming back on our next visit.
 - Patriot's Point
 - Neat again but HOT while touring the ship. We did the harbor tour and that was very enjoyable.
 - Jim Booth Gallery
 - Wonderful again. Jim was there and signed the painting that we purchased. He also gave us directions to one of the "off the beaten

path” plantations that is in one of his paintings, so it was neat to go ride by that.

- Folly Beach
 - Nice to walk on the beach, but don’t expect to eat supper there. Super, super crowded and crazy traffic!
- Shops on the Market
 - Fun as usual.
- Lodging
 - Oak Plantation Campground on Johns Island
 - Found out that we need to mark
 - <http://www.oakplantationcampground.com/>
 - Vendue Inn
 - <http://www.vendueinn.com/>
 - Ron and I got a night out and stayed here for our anniversary. It was very nice. I had told them it was our anniversary when I booked the room and after check-in they brought us chilled champagne. One benefit of staying here is that you get to skip the line waiting to go to the Rooftop Bar (just show the employee managing the line your room key), which was a nice perk.

Future Visit Wish-List

- Nathaniel Russell House Tour - <http://www.historiccharleston.org/experience/nrh/>
- Calhoun Mansion Tour - <http://www.calhounmansion.net/>
- Old Exchange & Provost Dungeon Tour - <http://www.oldexchange.com/>
- Charleston Museum - <http://www.charlestonmuseum.org/topic.asp?id=1>
- Ghost Walking Tour
 - Original Charleston Walks - <http://www.charlestonghosts.com/>
 - Tour Charleston - <http://www.tourcharleston.com/>
- Photo Walking Tour - <http://www.charlestonphototours.com/>
- Plantation Tour
 - Middleton - <http://www.middletonplace.org/>
 - Boone Hall - <http://www.boonehallplantation.com/>
- Tea at Charleston Place Hotel
 - http://www.charlestonplace.com/web/ocha/ocha_a2a_home.jsp
- Carriage tour with a different company
 - Palmetto - <http://www.carriagetour.com/>
 - Classic - <http://www.classiccarriage.com/>
 - Old Towne - <http://www.oldtownecarriage.com/>
 - Possibly a private carriage tour with Carolina Polo - <http://www.cpcc.com/>
- Restaurants
 - Fleet Landing - <http://www.fleetlanding.net/>
 - Tommy Condon's - http://www.tommycondons.com/cms_pages/
 - Hank's - <http://hanksseafoodrestaurant.com/>
- Restaurants near campground (Johns/James Island area)
 - Anchor Line (2293 Folly Rd, James Island)
 - Fried seafood shack
 - 25 minutes from campground
 - <http://www.roadfood.com/Reviews/Overview.aspx?RefID=1802>
 - Bessinger's Barbeque
 - <http://www.bessingersbbq.com/eathere/directions.aspx>
 - Brinson's Beef & Brew (951 Folly Rd, James Island)
 - 20 minutes
 - <http://www.brinsonsbeef.com/>
 - Charleston Crab House (145 Wappoo Creek Drive, James Island)
 - 15 minutes
 - <http://www.charlestoncrabhouse.com/>
 - JB's Smokeshack (closed on Sundays, 3406 Maybank Hwy, Johns Island)
 - 15 minutes
 - <http://www.jbssmokeshack.com/>
 - Med Deli Café (90 Folly Rd, James Island)
 - 15 minutes
 - <http://meddelicafe.com/>
 - Starfish Grille (520 Folly Rd, James Island)
 - 15 minutes
 - <http://www.starfishgrille.com/>

- Sunfire Grill and Bistro (brunch on Sundays, 1090 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, West Ashley)
 - 12 minutes
 - <http://www.sunfiregrill.com/>
 - Looks a little pricey with a semi-exotic menu
- St. Johns Island Café (brunch on Sundays, 3140 Maybank Hwy, Johns Island)
 - 15 minutes
 - Closed, but being replaced with another restaurant