

Georgia: Savannah & The Golden Isles

Tour-Only Itinerary

Discover Savannah's timeless grandeur and the stunning natural beauty of the Golden Isles on a walking tour taking you from historic cobblestone streets to pristine island sanctuaries. In Savannah, view impressive antebellum estates surrounded by trees dripping with Spanish moss, and while on Georgia's Golden Isles, follow trails through marine forests and along white-sand beaches. Explore Cumberland Island – with its protected sea turtles and wild horses – and delight in world-class birding on Little St. Simons Island. Stay in countryside lodges rich with history and southern comforts, and savor classic Low Country cuisine made from fresh, local ingredients. Your Golden Isles and Savannah walking tour, overflowing with the aristocratic splendor and magnificent natural beauty, will leave you with lifelong memories of this idyllic place.



Highlights

Venture into Georgia's renowned Golden Isles to hike marine forests, delicate estuaries, and the white-sand dunes of Cumberland Island National Seashore

Spend two nights on a private island exploring 11,000 acres of protected beach, wilderness, and bird sanctuaries by foot, kayak, boat, and bicycle

Embark on a captivating walking tour of Savannah – a city so beautiful that Abraham Lincoln decreed that it be spared during the Civil War

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided - Full Walking Adventures, rated easy with an occasional moderate option, including an average of 3 to 5 miles walking per day. Your walks will feature mostly flat terrain, including trails along the coast, on sandy beaches, and on city streets. Trails can be uneven with roots. The days on this tour allow for inclusions of cultural and historical importance. This tour includes four short ferry transfers through calm water.

DAY 1

Arrival in Savannah. Join your Georgia: Savannah & the Golden Isles tour

2-3 miles, easy. Wormsloe Plantation; 1-2 miles, easy

Your guide(s) will meet you at the Andaz Savannah at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.*

Often heralded as America's best walking city, Savannah is a gracious and atmospheric cultural center with a small-town feel. Its National Historical Landmark District is an open-air museum of colonial and Victorian buildings rich in antebellum charm. After meeting your fellow travel companions and guides, you set off to explore on foot with a local city guide. Laid out in 1733, this was the first planned city in the nation. Of the 24 neat, leafy, single-acre squares integral to British General James Oglethorpe's designs, 21 remain. The city, set on the Savannah River, was considered so beautiful that during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln demanded that General William Sherman spare it from flames during his famed march to the sea. You are sure to be grateful for Lincoln's discretion as you stroll with your guide.

After lunch at Savannah's famed Olde Pink House, set in an historic 1771 building, transfer to Wormsloe Plantation, the preserved ruins of a homestead built and owned by one of Georgia's colonial founders, Noble Jones. In this picturesque setting, ponder the house's remains and enjoy your choice of walk with a guide or on your own as you explore the forest's edge on trails that afford breathtaking views of the Isle of Hope.

Back in Savannah, freshen up at your hotel before dinner at Vic's on the River, set in an old cotton warehouse on the city's renowned River Street. In this historic building, savor a sophisticated twist on traditional Southern cuisine, from bisque and fried green tomatoes to French-influenced bouillabaise and Louisiana-style po'boys.

*Please be sure to bring long sleeved shirts and pants for protection from possible biting insects, particularly while on Little St. Simons Island. Insect repellent will be provided.

Accommodation: Andaz Hotel, Savannah

DAY 2

Savannah's River Walk

1 mile, easy. Jekyll Island Driftwood Beach; 2 miles, easy

After breakfast, leave on foot to stroll Savannah's Riverwalk, a pedestrian walkway along the Savannah River paved with 200-year-old cobblestones. Now home to art galleries, restaurants and shops, this path was once lined with bustling warehouses, many holding valuable cotton. Still a working harbor, you may catch views of the tugboats guiding huge cargo ships through the water. Stop to admire the sculptures and historic buildings along the way.

Mid-morning, leave the bustle of Savannah, and transfer two hours to Jekyll Island, one of Georgia's Golden Isles.

Long a seasonal source of food among indigenous people, some of the island came under private ownership during colonial days. Among the vacation homes built here by wealthy businessmen at the turn of the 20th century are structures made of tabby concrete, a material made from crushed oyster shells. After lunch, you stroll a bike path to the island's scenic Driftwood Beach. Located on the northern tip of Jekyll Island, its sands are dotted with starkly beautiful barren trees and exposed roots left behind by beach erosion. Enjoy time pondering this scene and wandering among the scarred, wind-sculpted arboreal beachscape before continuing on to your hotel. Upon arrival at your hotel, a restored compound of those vacation homes, you may take a dip in the heated swimming pool, relax on the gracious porch, or take a complimentary shuttle to the beach. Its long stretch of white sand is a pleasure to stroll. This evening, you will enjoy dinner in the dining room of your hotel.

Accommodation: Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island

DAY 3

Cumberland Island National Seashore

3-5 miles, easy

After an early breakfast, you shuttle to St. Marys and embark a ferry to Cumberland Island, the largest and perhaps most spellbinding of the Golden Isles. Once home to steel baron Thomas Carnegie, this

35-square-mile haven today plays host to wild horses, sea turtles, and more than 300 bird species among pristine maritime forests, unspoiled beaches, sweeping dunes, and vast marshes. More than 90 percent of its land is protected, making it a paradise for walkers. Upon arrival, you trace the island's footpaths through coastal woodlands to the Carnegie ruins and Dungeness Estate, a once-grand house boasting a history tied to James Oglethorpe, founder of the colony of Georgia, the family of Robert E. Lee, and the youngest of the Carnegie brothers, Thomas.

All that remains of Dungeness is a majestic and eerie skeleton of a sprawling mansion. Exploring this sight, it's easy to imagine the resplendent house that stood here as the epitome of Southern glory. Its chimneys tower like bookends propping up the still formidable two-story structure of the once-stately Queen Anne building. After time to explore, follow a trail to the nearby beach before returning to the ferry landing. This evening, you may dine at your choice of venues: the hotel's formal restaurant, a more casual setting on the pier featuring fresh seafood, or a restaurant along the beach to which you can board a shuttle.

Accommodation: Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island

DAY 4

Little St. Simons Island

2-3 miles, easy

This morning, you will take a short transfer to St. Simons Island. Here, embark a small ferry for a 10 minute ride to Little St. Simons, a scenic, privately owned barrier island among Georgia's picturesque Golden Isles. These five islands were named as much for the light that bathes their shores and coffee colored dunes as for the wealth brought to them by the 19th-century titans of industry such as the Astors and the Vanderbilts. Little St. Simons, spreading for 11,000 acres, is one of the least developed and is only accessible by boat. This unspoiled paradise is traversed by some 20 miles of walking trails and seven miles of beach. You arrive mid-day, in time to enjoy a delicious family-style lunch in the main lodge. After checking into your room, join the naturalist guides for an afternoon activity of your choice, perhaps following a quiet dirt road through dense forest hanging with Spanish moss to the beach. Watch for armadillos, deer, and birds as you walk through a thickly wooded area before the trail narrows and emerges onto an estuary. Here, pause to observe some of the wildlife which makes this area their home,

perhaps spotting great blue herons and turtles. As you approach the beach, the dirt road turns to a sandy trail and then a boardwalk. Amid the shore's tranquility, a bustle of activity unfolds on the sands and in the water, which you'll learn about as your naturalist guide describes this very active ecosystem. Armies of shorebirds and a carpet of seashells accompany you during your stroll as gentle waves lap at your feet.

Prior to dinner, join your fellow guests for a wine and cheese reception before a true southern-style dinner around a communal table. Low Country cuisine, after all, is best shared, whether fried chicken, peppery stews or red rice with beans. The trained chef at the lodge uses produce, herbs, and flowers from the island's organic garden and locally-sourced vegetables, cheeses, meats, and seafood from farms and fish markets on the mainland. After an unforgettable gastronomic experience, your resident naturalist may offer an optional night-time walk in search of owls or turtles.

Accommodation: The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island, Little St. Simons Island

DAY 5

Little St. Simons Island

2-4 miles, easy. Optional kayaking biking, skiff-exploration, or fishing*

Enjoy today exploring Little St. Simons Island, perhaps beginning with a pre-breakfast birding walk. Recognized by the American Bird Conservancy as an Important Birding Area, the island is on the Atlantic Migratory Flyway and hosts some 330 full- and part-time species, from bald eagles to roseate spoonbills. The unspoiled woodland and undeveloped beaches also lure a number of endangered species. Your naturalist will point out winged residents as you walk beneath a canopy of birdsong.

After breakfast, depending on the tides and weather, perhaps join a guided kayak paddle through the peaceful tidal waterways that thread their way through the island. As you explore, your naturalist guide reveals the secrets of this vibrant ecosystem. Alternately, take a short ride in the open-back trucks to the northern part of the island for a walk in search of alligators, herons, and other native wildlife; elevated platforms provide views over the ponds and marshes.

Return to the lodge for a family-style meal of salads, soup, and perhaps crab cakes made fresh by the chef. After lunch, you spend the afternoon as you wish. Join a naturalist for a fishing expedition or head out

on a truck safari to one of the island's estuaries, marshes, or rivers. Bicycle along the beach or on one of the many island trails. After a quick orientation, take out a skiff or kayak to explore the tidal waterways. Or follow more of the island's footpaths with your guide. The lodge also offers cozy outdoor and indoor sitting areas, perfect for relaxing with a good book. This evening, share stories of your rewarding day at a wine and cheese reception and over your final dinner at the lodge.

*A fishing license can be obtained at the lodge at your own expense

Accommodation: The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island, Little St. Simons Island

DAY 6

Departure from Savannah. Your *Georgia: Savannah & The Golden Isles* tour concludes

After breakfast, you transfer back to Savannah's International Airport, arriving at approximately 12:30 p.m., bidding farewell to your new friends. Begin your journey home or stay on to explore more of Georgia on your own.

For those that parked their car at the beginning of the tour, you will transfer back to the Andaz Savannah to arrive at approximately 1:00 p.m.

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 dinner	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓