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Georgia: Savannah & The Golden Isles

Travel Style - Guided Walking Tour

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep into the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.



Few destinations showcase a rich past, aristocratic splendor, and magnificent natural beauty as seamlessly as Georgia's Golden Isles and their historic gateway, Savannah. Join Country Walkers as you traverse the scenic walking trails of these spectacular barrier islands, once the playground to 19th-century kings of industry and today a haven of unspoiled wilderness. Stroll under canopies of stately trees dripping with Spanish moss. Follow pristine beaches as gentle waves lap at your feet. And explore coastal forests that harbor traces of history dating back to the Civil War. Our Southern tapestry takes you from the graceful squares of Savannah lined with restored Victorian gems to wildlife preserves, from the majestic ruins of palatial estates to exclusive island resorts. Easy trails make your exploration a true pleasure. And every invigorating step you take is buoyed by famously gracious hospitality and nourished by delectable low-country cuisine.

Tour Only Itinerary - 2019

Day 1

Arrive in Savannah

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

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



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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.

Accommodation: Andaz Hotel, Savannah

Sophisticated and modern, the Andaz Savannah is a stylish haven on the edge of the historic district. This artfully decorated hotel is just a few blocks from River Street, the bustling shopping avenue along the Savannah River, and set right on Ellis Square, a lively urban square of fountains and a life-sized chess set. Relax on the outdoor pool terrace and enjoy a handcrafted cocktail before settling in to your room graced with fine linens, comfortable robes, and a walk-in shower.

Day 2

Savannah's River Walk

1 mile, easy. 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 2 hours to Jekyll Island, another 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



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pleasure to stroll. You enjoy dinner in the hotels dining room this evening.

Accommodation: Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island

A member of the Historic Hotels of America and the centerpiece of Jekyll Island's historic district, the Queen Anne-style Jekyll Island Club recalls the grand days of the Industrial Age when elite businessmen built their "cottages" far from city life. Gracious and sprawling and recognizable by its iconic Victorian turret, rich history blends with modern comfort on lush grounds. At this island resort, dine in the grand dining room or on the casual pier. Your warm and comfortable room in the main building offers all the amenities and convenience you could need.

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% 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.

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

Accommodation: Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island

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Day 4

Little St. Simons Island

2-3 miles, easy

This morning, you take a short transfer to St. Simons Island. Here, embark a small ferry for a ten 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. The 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 rooms, 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. Amidst 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.

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

Accommodation: The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

The only lodging on Little St. Simons Island, your accommodations comprise Adirondack-style cabins and turn-of-the century cottages with a charming and rustic touch, some of which date to the early 1900s. While simple, all cabins and rooms offer private bathrooms and air conditioning. Secluded and tranquil, the lodge is set among moss-draped trees and enjoys quick access to undeveloped beaches and invigorating walking trails. Onsite naturalists are available to lead nature walks through the ancient maritime forest, kayak expeditions, bicycle rides, and bird-watching excursions. Note that Country Walkers may be sharing the lodge with others, therefore, all activities and meals may not be exclusive.

Day 5



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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 dinner at the lodge.

Accommodation: The Lodge on Little St. Simons Island

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Day 6

Departure from Savannah

After breakfast, you transfer back to Savannah, bidding farewell to your new friends. Begin your journey home or stay on to explore more of Georgia on your own.