



SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

With its dramatic moss-draped oaks and cobblestone streets, this coastal city is an ideal weekend getaway destination for lovers of art, food and history, writes Caroline Eubanks

DAY 1

Get your bearings by exploring Savannah's historic district on foot. The city is laid out in a grid pattern with a series of public squares tucked away. Each has its own history and features, like the setting for the famous bus stop scene in the film *Forrest Gump*, which is in Chippewa Square.

Pop into one of the many historic homes within this area that now operate as museums. The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace is an especially popular stop for Girl Scout troops, while the Mercer-Williams House was the setting for the real-life events depicted in the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. The Bird Girl sculpture on the book's cover is just one treasure inside the Telfair Academy, the region's oldest art museum. Between the main museum and the Jepson Center for the Arts, the collection ranges from 19th-century European paintings to contemporary sculpture.

Grab an alfresco lunch at the Collins Quarter, an Australian-inspired cafe two blocks away. The menu features signature

coffees including a popular spiced lavender mocha, as well as much-loved brunch fare such as avocado toast and eggs benedict.

Once satiated, make the short walk to the City Market area, Savannah's original retail hub that dates back to the 1700s. It's home to the American Prohibition Museum, which has exhibits on the 'failed experiment' in Savannah and the rest of the nation, as well as bootlegging, moonshining and more. End your visit with a cocktail at the museum's speakeasy, which serves classic drinks from the period.

Plan ahead and make a reservation at The Grey, a James Beard award-winning restaurant in the city's former Greyhound bus station. Here, chef Mashama Bailey crafts artful takes on traditional Southern dishes.

In the evening, watch the sun set from one of Savannah's rooftop bars. Peregrin at the Perry Lane Hotel has a pool and craft cocktails, while Perch is a laid-back alternative overlooking Forsyth Park, the city's largest green space.

IMAGES: ALAMY; GETTY



From left: A city corner in Savannah; engine driver inspecting the Savannah Central 30 steam locomotive at Georgia State Railroad Museum

Previous page, clockwise from top left: Cowboy boot planters; Driftwood Beach, Jekyll Island; a city clock; a local porch with iced tea; Savannah City Market; homemade buttermilk biscuits; Monument at Bonaventure Cemetery; Spanish moss; male pileated woodpecker at Skidaway Island State Park; Old Savannah Cotton Exchange building

IMAGES: ALAMY; GETTY



DAY 2

Get an early start, swinging by Auspicious Baking Co. for a flaky croissant or pastry before making the drive out to Wormsloe Historic Site. The former plantation is one of Savannah's most photographed landmarks, mostly for its dramatic avenue of oaks. The property, which belonged to an English colonist who arrived in 1733 with the state's founder, James Oglethorpe, is now in the care of Georgia State Parks. The sprawling property has information on colonial life, craggy tabby ruins and wildlife trails.

An important follow-up is a visit to the Pin Point Heritage Museum, a former seafood plant that now showcases the history of the Gullah/Geechee community here that descends from enslaved Africans brought to work on the plantations of the Sea Islands. It has historic photos of the inhabitants and exhibits on the language.

For lunch, head to the Moon River District where there are a number of options. At Sandfly BBQ, chow down on Southern-style pulled pork with sides like Brunswick stew, a delicacy said to have been created on the Georgia coast. Driftaway Cafe, meanwhile, showcases local seafood in its crab stew and shrimp salad sandwich.

Next, put on your walking shoes to explore Skidaway Island State Park, a maritime forest and salt marsh that's home to deer, crabs and birds. Bring binoculars to spot wildlife from the observation tower or hit the 6.2 miles of trails.

End the day with a hearty meal of fresh seafood at The Wyld Dock Bar, which sits along the creek between the Isle of Hope and downtown. Feast on the likes of fish tacos and roasted oysters, but save room for Key lime pie for dessert.



ESSENTIALS

When to go: The humid climate can be overwhelming for the uninitiated, so spring and fall are best for visitors as temperatures tend to average around 68-86F. And while there's no real 'low' season, the crowds are lighter in these months.

Currency: USD

Language: English

Getting around: The best way to get around is on foot or bike, especially if you're sticking to the historic district, but a car is helpful for exploring Tybee Island and other areas. Savannah also has a bus system to shuttle around town.



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DAY 3

Start the day at leisure, swinging by Finches Sandwiches and Sundries on your way out of town. Located in a converted gas station, this friendly spot serves breakfast in the form of a sausage, egg and cheese sandwich as well as pancakes, plus the essential coffee to keep you going.

Roam the grounds of Bonaventure Cemetery, the famous burial ground where the graves of songwriter Johnny Mercer and soldiers from the Spanish-American War are found. The tree-filled space feels almost like a park, with views of the marsh.

Spend the rest of the day exploring Tybee Island, a laid-back beach community a short

drive away that's home to art galleries and pirate-themed eateries. While you're there, take a tour of the famous Tybee Island Light Station or the former Civil War base at Fort Pulaski National Monument. Alternatively, just relax on the white-sand beach and take part in some fishing from the Tybee Island Pier and Pavilion.

End your day at The Crab Shack, a dockside restaurant set around a massive tree decorated with lights. Open since 1983, it's a local staple, where the menu includes traditional dishes of the region like deviled crab and Lowcountry boil, made of shrimp, sausage, corn and potato. □