

ESCAPING TO ...

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Get a taste of Southern culture—and plenty of seafood—with a visit to this coastal paradise.

by SHAUNICE AJIWE

DAY ONE ☉ This island might clock in at only 12 miles long, but there's plenty to see and do, whether you want to soak up the sun or explore—or a bit of both. Check in to an ocean-view room at **Beach House Hilton Head Island** (rooms from \$334), located in the buzzing downtown district, then head to the newly renovated pool deck, outfitted with year-round heated water and swanky cabanas. And be sure to hit the property's adjacent **Tiki Hut** for a toes-in-the-sand experience. This outdoor bar is open to the public and has been a cornerstone of the area since the late '70s. Later, catch a ride to **Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks**, a casual neighborhood joint on the northwestern part of the island, to watch the sunset and indulge in fresh catches.

DAY TWO ☉ Much of the island is walkable and bikeable, with various trails and bike rental shops. Spend an afternoon at one of the wildlife refuges, like the 50-acre **Audubon Newhall Preserve** or, for a small fee, the private **Sea Pines Forest Preserve**, where visitors can fish or ride horseback. Or stroll along the shore with a wine smoothie from the **Carolina Tasting Room**.

DAY THREE ☉ No break from the sun? Soak yourself to a bone-deep pain-relief massage at **Moor Spa**. And leave the island with a visit to the **Hilton Head Lighthouse**—a few steps to the top of the surrounding marsh. Low tide with dinner at the nearby **Quarterdeck**. You'll want that seafood order of oysters; I can't wait to try it.



Clockwise from top: Harbour Town Lighthouse; a cocktail at Hilton Head Distillery; bike riding on the beach; Quarterdeck.

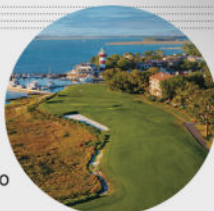


4 Have the kids in tow? The Coastal Discovery Museum, a partner of the Smithsonian, offers family-friendly activities such as sweetgrass basket making.

TRAVEL JOURNAL

BEACH LIVING

Must-do activities to round out your trip



1 Harbour Town Golf Links, a public course and PGA tour stop, will reopen later this year after a massive renovation. Its clubhouse, grill, and shop are remaining open.

2 Book a two-hour cocktail-making class or a tour of the production facility at Hilton Head Distillery, the island's only distillery. Take home a bottle of rum or whiskey.

3 Bring home some trinkets from Binyx, a gift shop focused on the region's Gullah Geechee culture—think candles, apparel, and educational books on history and traditions.

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