

Spending Two Perfect Days In Charleston

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Belmond Charleston Place

Photo Courtesy of Belmond Management Limited

There's a good reason **Charleston** is consistently ranked as one of the country's top destinations — from a bustling food and bar scene to hot hotel openings, history galore, and world-class shopping, you'll find something for everyone in the coastal South Carolina city.

We recommend hitting up the Holy City in early fall when the temperature drops from summer's sweltering heat, but the area stays temperate well into the holiday season, so there's rarely a bad time to visit. If you wish, plan your visit around enticing events such as **Charleston Restaurant Week** (September 7 to 18) and the **Taste of Charleston** (September 23 to 25).

Day One

For your first night, check in at the Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star **Belmond Charleston Place**. The stately hotel is perfectly perched at the intersection of King, Meeting and Market Streets, putting you right in the heart of the action. The newly renovated rooms — the \$34 million project brought everything from new bathrooms to fresh carpeting — will set even the most road-weary traveler at ease.



After you've put down your bags, lounge at the pool — the only one in the city to boast a retractable roof for 365 days a year of swimming fun — or head out on the town.

Start on King Street, where you'll find



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Middleton Place. Photo Courtesy of ©Stock- Brian Swartz

one of our favorite shops, [Candlefish](#). It stocks more than 30 brands of unique candles, plus a library of 100 house-made scents. Work hands-on with the chandlers in daily candle-making classes. Bonus: the sessions are B.Y.O.B.

Shopping is easy on King Street: hit up big brand names like Louis Vuitton and Gucci in the [Shops at Belmond Charleston Place](#), and then head to local clothiers like [Worthwhile](#) and [Hampden](#), where you'll see more avant garde names like Isabel Marant, Marni and Rick Owens.

Up the road, pause for home goods at shops like [Ro Sham Beaux](#), or check out the traditional silver rice spoons at [Croghan's Jewel Box](#). Down closer to Charleston Battery, pop into new boutique [Mans DeHart](#) for jewelry, great gifts and unique clothing.

Don't let yourself get hungry with all of the perusing. This food-focused city has something special for every meal of the day. For lunch, grab a sandwich at gourmet market [Artisan Meat Share](#) or linger over shrimp and grits at Charleston staple [Slightly North of Broad](#).

It's easy to spend the day strolling around the battery, imagining yourself as a genteel southern lady or gentleman. Pause to see the multicolored houses on Rainbow Row, then take another step back to the 19th century in the [Edmondston-Alston House](#), where General P.T. Beauregard stood on the piazza and watched the bombardment of Fort Sumter that started the Civil War.

For a bit of underground history, take a tour of the [Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon](#), where you'll see parts of the city's original battery, which was once stormed by the infamous pirate Blackbeard.

It's okay if you've worked up quite a thirst by this point. Grab cocktails and oysters at new hot spot [The Darling Oyster Bar](#) before settling in for a reservation at one of the city's most coveted tables at [The Macintosh](#), where you'll find three-time James Beard semifinalist Jeremiah Bacon dishing out local ingredients with modern American-meets-Southern flair. Afterwards, hit the bar at [Halls Chophouse](#) for a martini or boozy milkshake nightcap.

Day Two

The next morning, go trendy (think Brooklyn hipster meets southern gentleman) at newly renovated [The Restoration](#), a Forbes Travel Guide Recommended hotel, located on Wentworth Street, only a few blocks from Belmond Charleston Place. Rise coffee bar is one of the area's best — we love the iced rosemary lattes as much as Food Network favorite Alton Brown. Linger over brunch at [High Cotton](#), a Charleston staple, or grab a signature country ham biscuit at [Callie's Hot Little Biscuit](#), another local favorite, before you hit the road.

After putting down your fork, stroll through one of the oldest public markets in the country, [The Charleston City Market](#), to watch artisans weave their signature sweetgrass baskets.

Then, hop in the car and head to the country for the afternoon. Depending on the weather, watch the surfers on [Folly Beach](#), one of the area's most popular beaches, or head towards Ashley Road, where you'll find plantations like [Middleton Place](#), home to the country's oldest formal gardens, and [Drayton Hall](#), one of the best examples of Georgian Palladian architecture in the country.



Circa 1886. Photo Courtesy of Circa 1886

This evening, get dressed up. You're headed for the traditional southern charm of [Wentworth Mansion](#), where you'll experience the kind of luxury that can only be described as Downton Abbey meets Dixie. The delightful address' tasty neighbor, Four-Star [Circa 1886](#), is polished and poised, offering modern Southern fare with an upscale twist — think chicken-fried lobster with jalapeno cauliflower jardinière and white cheddar grits, or antelope with Carolina gold rice and a blackberry jam reduction.

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If you have room, finish the night with a cocktail at [The Gin Joint](#), a 1920s-style speakeasy just a few minutes from your room on Bay Street.

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