

A Local's Guide to Visiting Historic Charleston
The 51st Annual Meetings of the Public Choice Society, Charleston
March 6-9, 2014 Francis Marion Hotel Charleston, South Carolina
Peter Calcagno
College of Charleston

Welcome to Charleston, SC founded in 1670. Charleston is a beautiful historic city on the East coast. Charleston is larger than Savannah, GA and little less colorful than New Orleans, LA, but has all the charm, history and attractions to rival both. Charleston is the second largest city in South Carolina with a population just over 125,000. The downtown area is situated on an eight square mile peninsula with the Ashley River to the West and the Cooper River to the East making Charleston a pedestrian friendly city. The Southern point of the peninsula is the home of the Battery where the first shots of the Civil War were fired. You can walk along the harbor and see Fort Sumter in the distance. There are many reasons Condé Nast Magazine readers have awarded Charleston the #1 city in the U.S. three years in a row.

Attractions:

Marion Square: Open greenspace across the street from the hotel, originally part of the Citadel campus renamed for Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion. In addition, there is a statue honoring John C. Calhoun. This beautiful relaxing area also has free wi-fi.

White Point Garden: A mile and half away from the conference hotel is the southernmost point of the peninsula where you can overlook Charleston Harbor and stroll along the edge of the water. From here, you can see the Battery, where the first shots of the Civil War were fired. In the harbor you can see Fort Sumter, Castle Pinckney, and the Sullivan's Island Lighthouse. Large historic homes line the streets.

The Market: Ten minute walk from the hotel the hub of the tourist area. The open-air market is worth the walk through to see all the wares. At the corner of Meeting and Market is the Confederate Museum, which is often mistaken for the home of the slave market. The market is the home of several restaurants and bars, but not the ones the locals frequent.

The College of Charleston: The College of Charleston founded in 1770 is sandwiched between Calhoun and Wentworth Street, which is a short distance from the hotel. The heart of campus is on George Street and the campus has a lot of charm and character surrounded by Live Oak trees filled with Spanish moss. Randolph Hall (built in 1829) the main administration building is located in the center of campus and is worth seeing.

Churches and Cemeteries: Charleston is nicknamed the Holy City and steeples cover the cityscape and you can see a church steeple from any place in the city. Anglican, Baptist, Calvinist, French Huguenot, and Unitarian churches can all be found here. Many of the churches have small cemeteries next to them some of which have the representatives from

South Carolina that signed the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution.

My favorite thing to do is to walk along the smaller streets of the historic district and look at the unique architecture. I recommend Tradd Street, but any of the little streets South of Broad Street will have that Charleston Charm.

Dining: Charleston has a thriving food scene and there are many good restaurants in a variety of budgets. The fine dining is going to feature amazing food and service that will be a splurge. The options within walking distance of the hotel are many that offer great food at moderate prices. This guide highlights some of my favorite places that might not be on the tourist's list, but by no means is a complete list. Reservations are always recommended, and most restaurants use opentable.com.

Fine Dining:

FIG 232 Meeting Street: Chef Mike Lata who has been Iron Chef America and is a James Beard Award winning chef. He creates a seasonal menu that focuses on local American fare. Make your reservation now. This is probably the best restaurant in Charleston right now.

Husk 76 Queen Street: Chef Sean Brock has been on Iron Chef and is a James Beard Award winning chef. They are making everything themselves and grow much of their food on a local farm. Make your reservations now. Want to be more spontaneous? Next to the restaurant is the Bar at Husk where they make handcrafted cocktails and have a small bar menu. (I would recommend the bar for lunch, but not for dinner.)

McCrary's 2 Unity Alley: Just off East Bay Street McCrary's is also run by Chef Sean Brock of Husk. McCrary's is southern fine dining with a modern twist. The building is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. Make your reservations now.

Hall's Chophouse 434 King Street: Everything you expect in a chophouse from seeing the cuts of beef to impeccable service. You will be greeted and checked upon by one of the owners of this family restaurant. Make your reservations now.

Upper King Street:

King Street North of Calhoun Street has become a vibrant scene of bars and restaurants with many choices that have great food at reasonable prices. What follows are some of my favorite places.

Fish 442 King Street: A seafood restaurant with an Asian twist great food and service with a nice bar to hang out as well. They rotate their menu seasonally, but always have local seafood specials including the "Naked Fish".

Ordinary Oyster Bar 544 King Street: An oyster bar in a converted bank that offers small plates for everyone to share. This restaurant is also run by Chef Mike Lata the chef owner of FIG.

Pane E Vino 17 Warren Street: A half block off King Street serving authentic Italian dishes and wine in this cozy trattoria with a lantern-lit courtyard. If the weather is nice, it is a great place to sit and have a glass of wine and enjoy some good Italian food.

O-Ku 463 King Street: High-end Japanese fare, mostly sushi, with sake in a cozy atmosphere.

Monza 451 King Street: Cozy atmosphere with zebra wood tables. Only a couple of beers and house red and white wine on the menu, but Monza's has amazing authentic Neapolitan style pizza. Thin crust pizza with amazing ingredients, fresh pasta dishes, soups and salads. An open kitchen with a wood burning stove lets you watch all the action.

Stars Restaurant a Rooftop & Grill Room 459 King Street: A traditional steak house with a great atmosphere and service with an open kitchen. They have a nice cocktail selection, craft beers and wine (yes wine) on tap. The rooftop bar opens at 4:00.

39 Rue De Jean 39 John Street: Located a half block of King Street Rue De Jean is a French Bistro with a relaxed atmosphere that serves everything from croq' monsieur and hamburgers to rabbit and short ribs. They have a bar on one-half of the restaurant that is a nice spot to have a cocktail. It is also a nice upscale lunch option.

The Grocery 4 Cannon Street: Just off King Street, this place is a cozy restaurant that serves handcrafted cocktails, fresh and local American cuisine from small plates to entrees for the table this place has a great neighborhood feel.

Bars and Grills:

Boone's Bar 345 King Street: A small bar that has good beer on tap, a great burger, and sandwiches. They have an upstairs bar and feature live music.

Blind Tiger Pub 36-38 Broad Street: A historic pub with two bars inside and a beautiful courtyard in the back. Good pub food and reasonably priced drinks can be found here, and it usually does not get really crowded until late in the evening.

Closed for Business 453 King Street: Upscale pub food that focuses on great craft beers 42 on tap including many great local beers. Quirky atmosphere with wood paneling. Taxidermic squirrels and other animals dot the walls. The crowd picks up night as a gathering spot for young professionals.

Charleston Beer Works: A true dive bar with good pub food such as wings and burgers with lots of beers on tap. Televisions all over the bar with sports line the walls. Happy hour 4:00-7:00 includes half price appetizers, and live music on weekend nights.

The Rarebit 474 King Street: Relatively new to the upper King Street scene Rarebit is an upscale 50's inspired diner with a long marble countertop, community table, and large booths. The food is not fancy, but it is very good and reasonably priced. The real treat is the cocktail list they are making classic cocktails like the Manhattan with great ingredients and top shelf liquors. My favorite is the Moscow Mule, served in a copper cup.

Mad River Bar & Grille 32 N. Market Street: This converted church makes for an interesting bar scene. This is a good place to go after dinner have drinks and take in the nightlife of Charleston.

Mellow Mushroom 309 King Street: One of the only chains I would recommend, great pizza and sandwiches, but what makes it unique is one of the best beer selections in Charleston. They have a "100 and 200 Beer Club." Ask to sit upstairs at the bar it has a better atmosphere.

Big Gunn Burger Shop & Bar 137 Calhoun Street: two minutes from the hotel. Gourmet burgers, priced at \$12-14. During happy hour (4-6pm weekdays) burgers are half priced.

Lunch Scene:

Five Loaves Café 43 Cannon Street: Two Blocks west of King Street this little café has great homemade soups, sandwiches and salads that are well above the normal faire.

Nick's Bar-B Que 288 King Street: Authentic barbecue from sandwiches to tacos everything is made fresh daily the counter service makes it an easy place to get in and out.

Gaulart & Maliclet Fast & French 98 Broad Street: Known to the locals as simply Fast and French and that is exactly what this place delivers. They serve fresh soups, salads, sandwiches which include the croq' monsieur and pates. Enjoy your lunch at a long diner style counter.

Cru Café 18 Pinckney St: Just a block off Market Street, about a 15-minute walk from the hotel, Cru is a small restaurant in an historic house. Most lunch entrees are under \$12, and the food is consistently excellent.

Boone's Bar and **Closed for Business** are also good lunch spots.

Worth the Drive:

If a dive bar is your thing then just North of the historic district are some great places to grab a beer and enjoy the local scene.

Moe's Crosstown Tavern 714 Rutledge Ave: A no frill neighborhood bar with a great selection of beers on tap, wings, and I think the best burger and fries in town. Great bartenders that take care of their regulars and a pool table completes the atmosphere.

The Tattooed Moose 1137 Morrison Drive: Featured on the Food Networks Diners, Drive-in and Dives great selection of beers, burgers, wings, hand cut duck fat fries and their specialty the Duck Club. The tables and walls are covered in graffiti and if the weather is nice they have a deck to enjoy.