

la ferme de la lochère

bespoke culinary & wine holidays in Burgundy
with Katherine Frelon

LUXE

BEAT MAGAZINE

Navigation Menu

Charming St. Simons Island,
Georgia

Home

Destinations

Charming St. Simons Island, Georgia

Posted By Jan Ross on Jun 21,
2015 | 0 comments

Tweet 3

Pin it

Share:

f

P

in

g+

t

digg



Beautiful sunset on St. Simons Island

I am constantly amazed at how many lovely islands are tucked away along the southern coast of the United States. Unique, beautiful places, many of which are still undiscovered and unspoiled by tourism. The Golden Isles, strewn along the quiet waters of the Georgia coast like the jewels in a priceless necklace comprise several enchanting barrier islands, including Jekyll Island, Sea Island, Little St. Simons Island, St. Simons Island and the mainland city of Brunswick.

The largest of the Golden Isles is St. Simons, where visitors return year round to enjoy the warm and temperate climate, miles of beautiful and wide sandy beaches, four golf courses and plenty of interesting little shops and restaurants. Located quite near Savannah, Georgia, the island is easily accessible and has been popular for families, couples and groups of friends for generations. Chosen America's Favorite Beach Town by Travel+Leisure in 2014 for its Southern charm, serenity and affordability, the island well deserves this honor.

I recently spent a delightful few days with some girlfriends relaxing and enjoying everything this beautiful island has to offer, including a stay at the luxurious King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort.



Welcome to the King and Prince Resort!

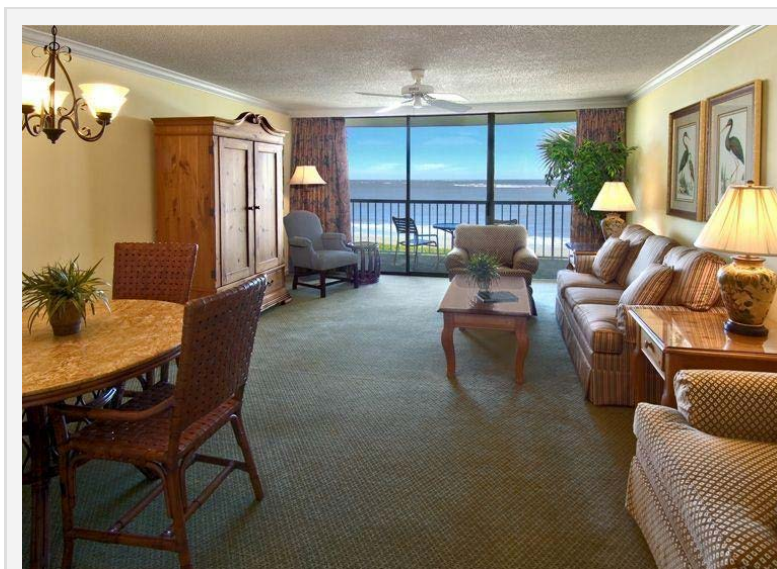
For 75 years, the luxurious King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort has been welcoming guests to its idyllic oceanfront retreat, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Opening as a seaside dance club in 1935, the main hotel opened to the public six years later in 1941 — and immediately became a popular beach getaway location. During World War II, the hotel served as a naval coast-watching and training facility but resumed its popularity as a favored island resort in 1947.

The Mediterranean style, terra cotta façade, and spacious and lovely recently remodeled lobby were our first introduction to the resort and we were immediately

impressed. After a multi-million dollar makeover, the resort is justifiably proud of their new atrium space and completely renovated lobby and pool and restaurant, now transformed into a beautiful, open area done in seaside colors with striking ocean views.

A golf course, Royal Treatment Cottage for massages, the wonderful Echo restaurant, tennis courts, five indoor and outdoor pools all combine to create a resort location that is perfect for groups of any size. It's no surprise that *Southern Living* magazine chose the resort to add to its Southern Living Hotel Collection, a series of the most wonderful hotels in the South.

The resort has a variety of accommodations, including hotel rooms and suites, two- and three-bedroom beach villas and seven gracious guest homes with from one to five bedrooms, each unique and delightful. We were lucky enough to stay in one of the resort's beautiful two-bedroom, ocean view villas. The two- and three-bedroom villas are all ocean view or oceanfront, and are individually owned, so the décor varies. Our villa was beautifully furnished with comfortable furniture, a fully equipped kitchen, two bedrooms, and a view of the pool area and the beach. We always appreciate having room to relax and a kitchen is great for snacks and for saving money on a few meals you prepare yourself.



Villa living room.



View from our villa

We truly enjoyed everything about our stay on St. Simons Island but one of the highlights was definitely the great food we found everywhere. The restaurant at the King and Prince Resort called Echo was one of our favorites.

Serving classic coastal cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere, Echo is the only oceanfront restaurant on the island. The name is an homage to the history of the hotel and island when the Navy purchased the local airport in 1942 and radar was a new technology, a critical advantage for the Allies in World War II. The restaurant is charming and airy, with large windows overlooking the beach, distinctive seaside colors and a beautiful floor reminiscent of the light, weathered oak found in beach cottages.

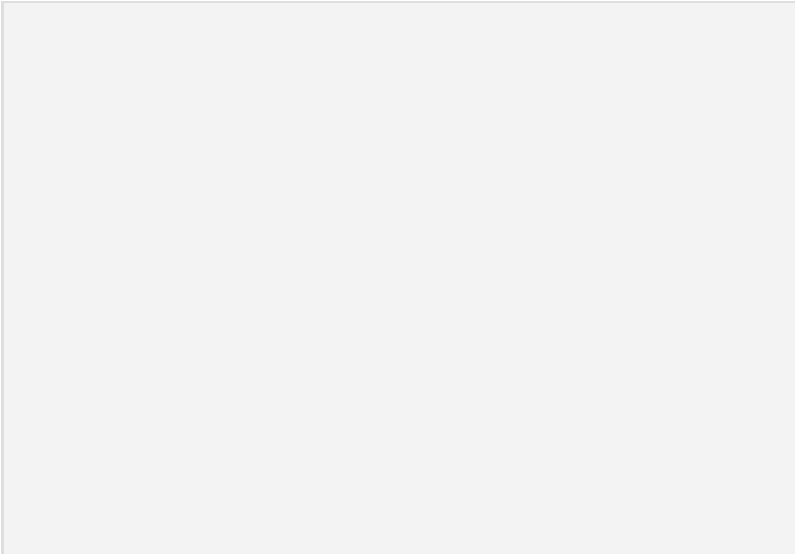
We enjoyed breakfast at Echo twice and sampled everything from a freshly prepared omelet to eggs benedict with crab cakes, all of which were wonderful. The restaurant has a full, hot breakfast buffet with an omelet bar and some of the freshest and most delicious fruit we have ever tasted. Whatever you order, be sure to get the “cinnamon doughnuts.” These are not your

typical doughnuts, but more like light, delightful *beignets* which have been dipped into cinnamon sugar. They are served hot, fresh and so delicious, you will want your own order — so don't even try to share!



The fabulous cinnamon doughnuts at Echo

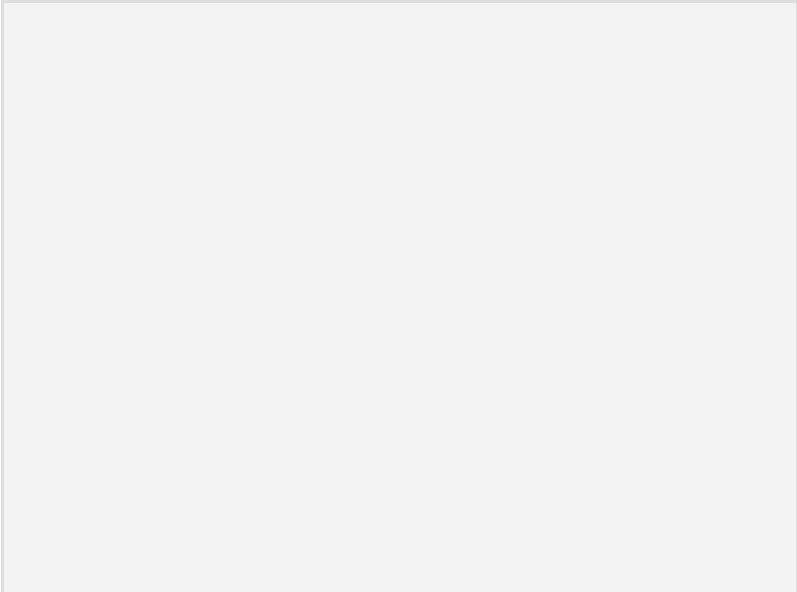
I also recommend you try the crab cakes and grouper tacos for lunch or dinner. In addition, the restaurant offers a local Southern specialty of shrimp and grits which was among the best we have tasted. The service was excellent as well; when my steak was not prepared correctly, it was whisked away and replaced with one that was perfectly prepared — and then comped, for the inconvenience. A pumpkin spice cake for dessert came adorned with a white chocolate candy imprinted with the name of the resort — just another charming and caring touch.





Pumpkin Spice Cake with a nice touch!

Our first day on the island, we enjoyed a trolley tour of the island with St. Simons Trolley Island Tour, which was the perfect introduction. There are two tours daily in the summer and you can book your tickets online or just purchase them when you arrive. Look for the green trolley underneath the big oak tree by the pier in St. Simons Island's Pier Village. We had no idea how large the island was (18 square miles) or how much history it included until we took the tour. Our tour guide, Kevin, was funny, interesting and genuinely knowledgeable about the area. The tours have been operating for over 20 years and the vintage 1930s wooden trolley is a fun way to learn about the island.





St. Simons Trolley Island Tour

The tour includes 36 points of interest and 400 years of island history and folklore, including a walking tour of the historic Christ Church churchyard; the Lighthouse which is one of only three working lighthouses in Georgia; Bloody Marsh, site of a famous 1742 battle; Fort Frederica, the town and fort settled by General James Oglethorpe, the founder of Savannah; and Retreat Plantation.



Christ Church

After the tour, pop into Barbara Jeans. Our trolley driver informed us that the best crab cakes on the island were

to be had at this location, so how could we possibly pass up that recommendation? This friendly neighborhood restaurant is a family-run, multi-unit establishment that opened in 1998. They specialize in seafood and made-from-scratch, home-style cooking. Barbara Jean Barta runs the restaurants and she has also written a cookbook. (You can order the famous crab cakes online.) We sampled one crab cake and, although it was good, we thought the crab cakes at Echo were better.



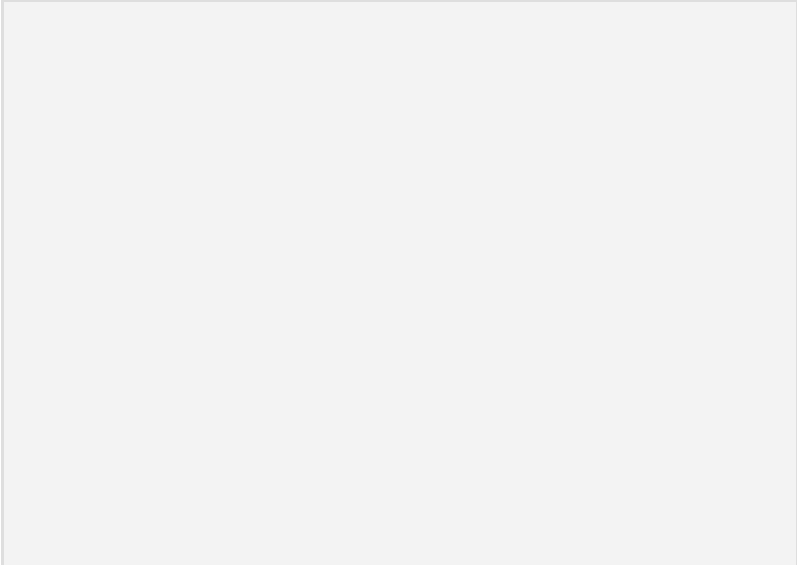
Barbara Jeans Crab Cakes

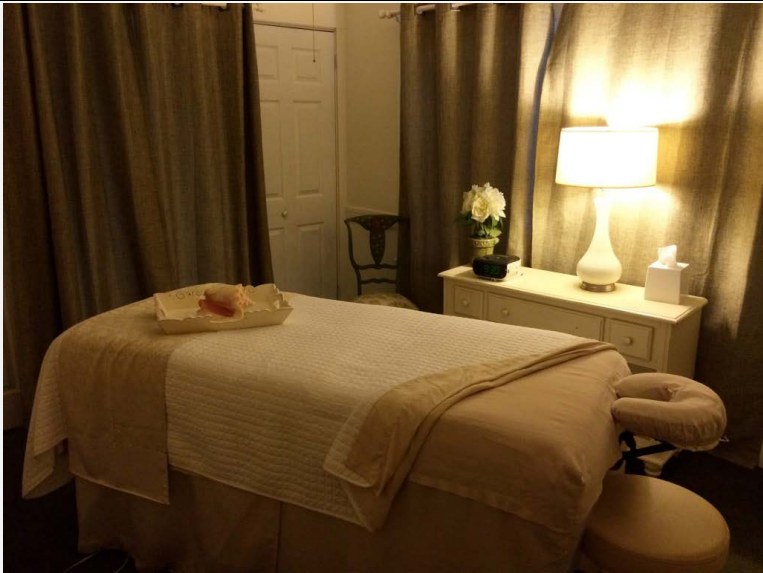
My travel companions spent the afternoon relaxing by one of the pools at the King and Prince Resort or strolling on the picturesque beach, but I was lucky enough to experience a massage at the Royal Treatment Cottage. A historic beach cottage purchased by the resort just a few years ago, this little seaside retreat is just a few steps from the beach but miles away from any stress you might be experiencing. The front porch with a porch swing welcomes you to the casual décor of a quaint beach cottage with a lovely lounge with a fire, delicious cookies and ice water, juice or tea, a place where you can relax in a robe and sandals and feel as if you never want to leave.



Front porch of the Royal Treatment Cottage

The Royal Treatment Cottage is exclusively for massage therapies and treatments designed to melt away any tension you might have. I can highly recommend the Custom Cottage Massage, which was so wonderful and relaxing that I never wanted it to end!





Welcome to heaven

After our relaxing afternoon, we headed to dinner at Decoy Bar and Grill. Located just a couple of blocks from the resort and an easy walk, this comfortable and friendly restaurant is owned by a long-time Island resident and has a full service menu and full service bar. With dark wood floors and paneling along with Decoy memorabilia and outdoor seating, this is truly an inviting location for lunch or dinner. Intrigued by the fried lobster appetizer, I ordered it and was really pleased. Fresh, crunchy, and delicious, it was the perfect prelude to my dinner. Our waiter encouraged us to try one of their famous pasta dishes, so I ordered the shrimp and tomato pasta. Though a little bland, it was still good and the shrimp was definitely fresh and wonderful.

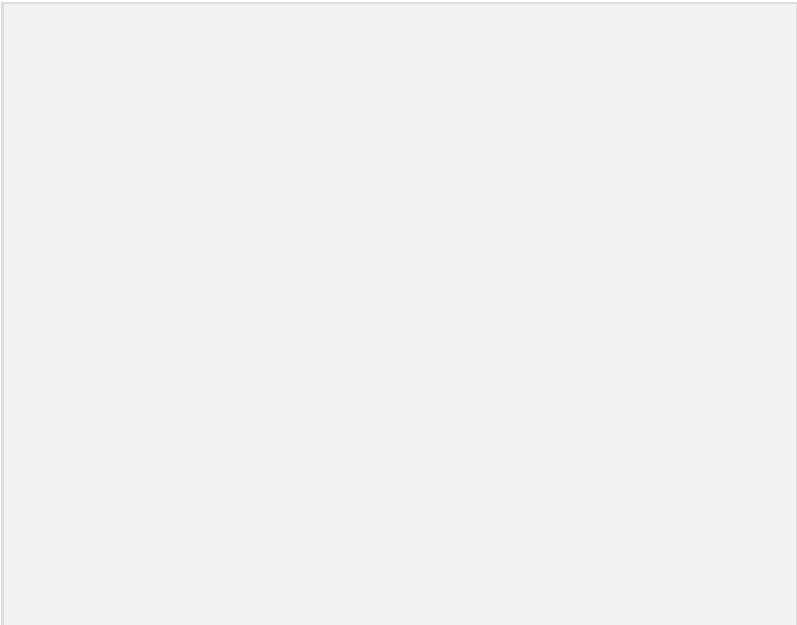
Our next day on the island, we had one of the most unique experiences I have ever had in all my years of traveling. The Lady Jane shrimp boat offers shrimping excursions on quiet and protected St. Simon Sound. The Lady Jane is a steel shrimping vessel which has been retired but painstakingly refurbished with an air conditioned cabin, restroom, and a large open covered deck with plenty of room to walk around.



The Lady Jane

I have been on many cruises like this and was expecting a rather boring experience but I could not have been more wrong. After we had been cruising along for a few minutes, the crew dropped the shrimping net into the water and pulled it behind the ship for a while, then hauled it back into the boat.

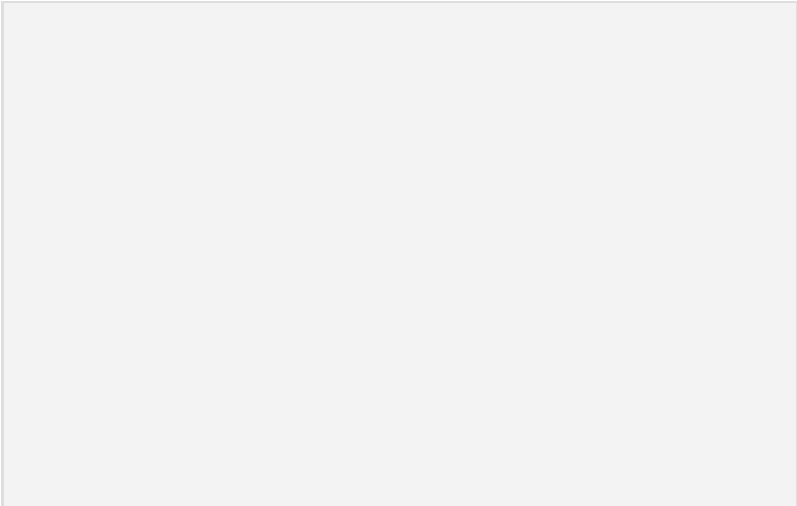
The biologist onboard unlaced the net, and out poured an incredible assortment of local sea life, including shrimp, a wide variety of fish, blue crabs, horseshoe crabs, and stingrays. The kids onboard were not the only ones fascinated by the assortment spread out on the wooden table for everyone to see.





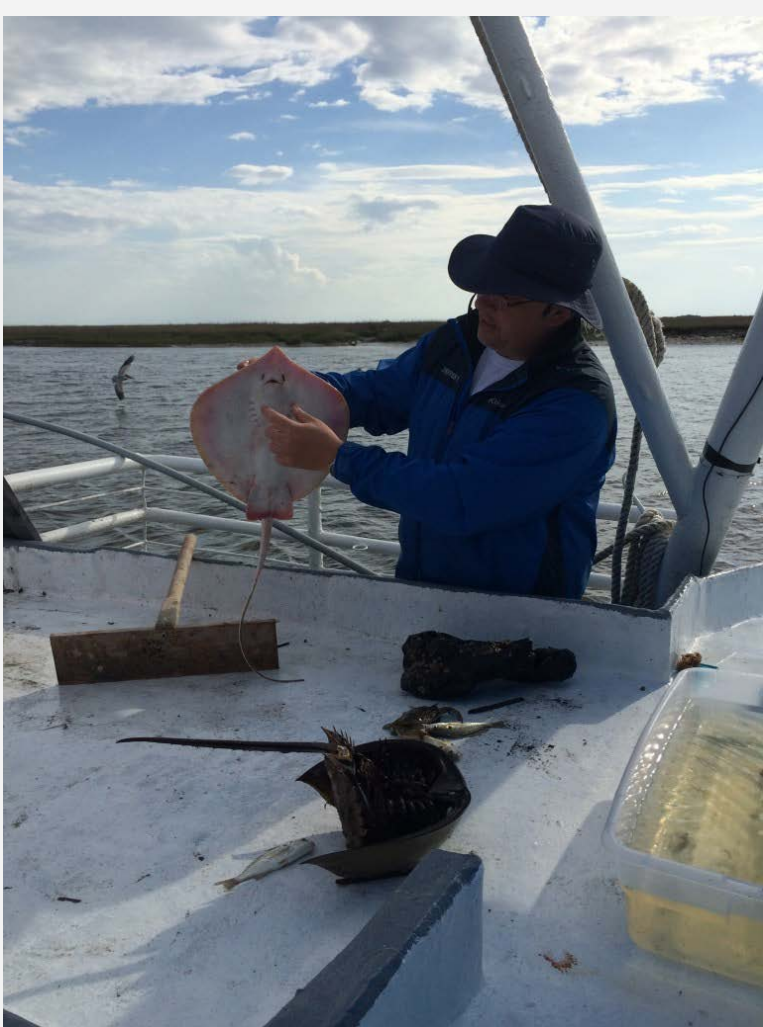
Kids checking out the net used on the Lady Jane

The speaker was friendly, funny and interesting as he picked up different creatures to talk about, pass around and plunk into a clear container of water for us to view further. We were all shocked when he put his hand a little too close to a blue crab and that defiant creature leaped up at least 12 inches and grabbed his finger, holding on so tight that it drew blood. The speaker was very calm about the whole experience, talking away as he pried the crab off his finger and staunched his wound. We were all very careful to stay away from the crabs after that!





A horseshoe crab on the Lady Jane



A stingray on the Lady Jane

The crew lowered and drew the net up several times, each time bringing in different and amazing creatures

for us to see, as all the seabirds in the area gathered away, hoping to grab one of the smaller creatures as they were dipped back into the water. It was a fascinating cruise and one that everyone who visits the island should take.



Birds hoping for a tidbit

After an afternoon of checking out the local shops at Pier Village and picking up a few items, we decided it was time for Italian food on our last night on the island and headed to Nazarros Italian Cuisine. As the restaurant is tucked away in a shopping center, you might not think you could get gourmet quality Italian food here, but you would be wrong. A small, homey place with dark wood touches and linen tablecloth covered tables, the restaurant also has a full bar and an

outside dining area. After fresh and delicious Caesar salads, I enjoyed lobster ravioli that was obviously freshly made. Although the menu specified that it was pesto lobster ravioli, I was still a little shocked to see my ravioli covered with a green sauce but once I took a bite, my reservations disappeared, as it was wonderful.

We were sad to leave beautiful St. Simons Island the next day, but began making plans to return as soon as possible to this lovely, charming and unspoiled barrier island.

Share:       





Author: Jan Ross

Jan Ross has been traveling the world since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer. She became a full-time travel writer in 2009 and travels the world with her photographer husband, writing and photographing their experiences for a variety of venues, both print and online. They have over 200 articles published and are always working on more. They find cruising a great way to see the world and take at least 2-3 cruises a year to a variety of locations. When they are not traveling, they spend time at home with their family in Kentucky.