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## Savannah, Georgia: The Hostess City of the South

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Savannah, Georgia: The Hostess City of the South

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Live oak trees adorned with Spanish moss.

Savannah, Georgia is called the “Hostess City of the South” for its hospitality, and that hospitality is one of the first things you will notice about this lovely city perched on Georgia’s Atlantic coast. Drawling Southern voices welcome you, and provide your first clue that Savannah is a place where the pace of life slows down, living is easy, and a tall glass of sweet iced tea is always the drink of choice.

The city’s beauty, bedecked as it is by the ubiquitous Spanish moss, and arranged in a series of lovely park-like squares, is probably the next thing you notice. Drive into the heart of the city, with its abundance of live oak trees and lush blooms, and you will begin to catch glimpses of the busy Savannah River, and the gorgeous, sprawling historic homes.

Savannah has a humid, subtropical climate so, if you choose to visit in the summer, dress lightly, drink plenty of water, and take breaks on some of the breezy restaurant patios for a glass of that famous sweet southern iced tea in a glass packed full of ice; that's the way they drink it in the South!



Flowering tree in Forsyth Park

There is no lack of wonderful places to stay in the city, but the [Forsyth Park Inn](#) in the historic district of Savannah should be your first choice. Located right on the largest park in the historic district covering 30 acres, and one of the most beautiful in the city, this historic bed and breakfast is where you will experience that Southern hospitality at its finest. Enjoy the view of gorgeous Forsyth Park from the rocking chairs lined up on the large, columned verandah or venture out into the park to enjoy the walking paths, the beautiful fountain built in 1858, the people-watching, or experience the Farmers Market on Saturdays.



The lovely Forsyth Park Inn

The Forsyth Park Inn is within walking distance of the Savannah River and River Street where there are dozens of interesting little shops and restaurants, as well as antique shops, theaters, historic mansions, and anything else you might want to experience in other parts of town. The Inn is a gorgeous, sprawling circa-1893 Queen Anne Victorian mansion, which typifies the style with its ornate window and roof pediments and deep verandah. The interior is just as beautiful with spectacular woodwork which includes 14-foot ceilings, 12-foot doors, a magnificent grand staircase, and dark parquet floors throughout.



Impressive staircase at the Forsyth Park Inn.

With 10 guest rooms, each unique and individually decorated to complement the style of the mansion, there is a perfect choice for every taste. Many have sitting areas, fireplaces and whirlpool tubs in the bathrooms. On a recent visit, two girlfriends and I stayed in Room #3 which has two queen beds, a fireplace and sitting area, a whirlpool tub, and an incredible view of the park. There is also a garden cottage in the back overlooking the charming garden courtyard which is pet friendly, and has a full, tiny kitchen which would be perfect for a longer visit to the city. All the rooms have televisions, telephones with data ports, Wi-Fi, hair dryers, lightweight spa robes, special soaps and shampoos.



The quiet garden courtyard at the Forsyth Park Inn.

One of the many advantages to choosing a bed and breakfast is that the included breakfasts are usually wonderful and the Forsyth Park Inn had particularly wonderful offerings each morning. Breakfast is served beginning at 8:30 a.m. and guests are assigned a time so there will be no overcrowding in the parlor or on the verandah. A buffet features homemade granola or oatmeal, an assortment of breakfast breads and muffins, yogurt and juice. Then, seasonal fruit is served followed by a full gourmet breakfast of such offerings as Florentine Eggs Benedict or Fresh-Fruit-Stuffed French Toast. The menu for the following morning is posted every day and we eagerly checked it so we could look forward to the next morning's breakfast!



Breakfast is served at the Forsyth Park Inn

In the evening, beverages and hors d'oeuvres are served in the parlor, and guests are encouraged to relax and enjoy the view from the verandah or in the private garden courtyard around back. Tasty sweets are available in the late evening for a snack before bed.

The staff at the Forsyth Park Inn exemplified the hospitality of the city with their friendly manner and

helpfulness. They are available to help with booking tours, making dinner reservations or getting tickets to entertainment venues.

When you are ready to see the rest of the city, one of the best ways is with a trolley tour. There are several trolley companies; we took a tour that was a great introduction to the city with [Oglethorpe Trolley Tours](#). With a driver narrating the tour instead using a recorded version, she made additions based on what we were seeing, and that made for a very enjoyable tour. The trolley will also drop you off anywhere you like after the 90-minute tour (some guests were even dropped off at their hotel). For the rest of the day, you can hop on one of the company's trolleys and hop off to explore the entire city. You will definitely want to hop off to see some of the historical homes and churches on your own, as many offer tours.



Historic home in Savannah

There are more than 100 distinct neighborhoods in Savannah, but the most popular tours will all cover the downtown area, which includes the Landmark Historic District and Victorian District. Savannah's Historic District has 22 squares, which are lovely little parks surrounded by gorgeous homes. Each square is different and varies in size, personality and formality, but all have charming sculptures, fountains, walking paths and beautiful landscaping.



One of the historic churches in Savannah

Hop off the trolley and stroll to River Street to explore the shops and see the views of the river. The streets are paved with ballast stones which were transported in the holds of ships bound for Savannah and the cotton bales which waited there a hundred years ago. At journey's end, the stones were thrown overboard and the thrifty settlers used them to pave the streets. Interesting to think what stories some of those stones could tell!

When it's lunch or dinner time, head to Spanky's for a lunch of some locally caught shrimp. I recommend the grilled shrimp quesadilla – and then be sure to stop at [Savannah's Candy Kitchen](#) for a sample of that



delicious Southern delicacy, pecan pralines. More than likely, you will find yourself buying a box or two to take home.



Try a pecan praline sample

If you are in the mood for a more adventurous tour on another day, check out the [Segway of Savannah](#) tours. We had an absolute blast touring on these fun, wheeled transportation vehicles. Don't be nervous; you will be shown a training video and have plenty of time to practice before you begin the tour. It's really very easy once you get the hang of it – and so much fun! Riding a Segway is all about balance because you make it move by leaning, which becomes second nature pretty quickly. Savannah is one of the most perfect cities to take a Segway tour because there are no hills, and most drivers are patient and considerate. As this is a tourist-friendly town, and you are able to get really close to the beautiful, historic homes, many of which are hundreds of years old and have witnessed the Civil War.

After your Segway tour, check out City Market for shopping and area activities. When you are ready for a break from strolling and shopping, have lunch or dinner at [Belford's of Savannah](#). Try the Beer Battered Fish Sandwich, a Parmesan-and-beer battered fish filet

served on a French baquette; I guarantee you will love it! The brick patio at Belford's with the overhead fans lazily turning is the perfect place for relaxing and peoplewatching on a summer afternoon or evening.



Fish Po Boy at Belford's

Be sure to plan on dinner one night at [The Pirates House](#), a fascinating and fun place to eat. When the restaurant was first established in the early 1700s as an inn for sailors, many unfortunate grog-drinkers found themselves knocked out, dragged through the tunnel hidden in the restaurant, and shanghaied into service on one of the many sailing ships in the harbor. Try the restaurant's famous pecan chicken — and plan for a lot of chicken on your plate!

When you are exhausted from all that shopping, touring, and eating, it's time for a relaxing spa day. [The Poseidon Spa](#) at the Mansion on Forsyth Park is an excellent choice. Beautiful and quietly elegant with a wonderful staff, this is one of the nicest spas I have ever visited. My friends and I had marvelous massages, but the spa also offers an array of treatments and packages. I suggest a day of massages, facials, wraps, mani/pedis and then dinner at the Mansion. I can't imagine a lovelier day!

Savannah may very well capture your heart as it does for many visitors; anyone who has been to Savannah loves it. You may find yourself planning your next trip to this lovely jewel of a Southern city before you have even left.



Sunset on the Savannah River



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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