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The Frugal Joys of Car-Tripping: Savannah, Georgia

by TFB EDITORS on JULY 11, 2012

By Jan Ross

I was amazed to see the price of gas go below \$3 a gallon last week when I was traveling and it just reinforced my opinion that car trips can be a truly frugal way to go. My husband never used to be a fan of car trips, but he's come around to my (economical) way of thinking. And we have come to enjoy our time on the road – as long as we don't have to drive too long (no more than about six hours) and have a great destination to look forward to at the end of the trip.



On the other hand, two of my other favorite travel partners – my sister and sister-in-law – will drive just as far as required, especially if there is a beach destination when we finally stop. We actually enjoy our time in the car and consider it part of the vacation. Stocked up with an absurd assortment of car snacks and plenty of catching up to do since my sister lives far away from the two of us, we don't mind a day-long car trip at all.

Driving to your destination combined with just staying a few days in economy lodgings – or, in my personal opinion, luxury lodgings for which I have obtained an incredible deal – means you can take a fabulous trip for very little money. Look for restaurant coupons and other special offers or stay in a condo or apartment and prepare some of your own meals and you have saved even *more* money.

Now the question is: Where to go?



Filled with huge, gorgeous, live oak trees festooned with Spanish moss, Savannah is a truly lovely and unique city.

In a series of posts, I'm going to talk about some *my* favorite car-trip destinations – what we ate, where we went, where we stayed, and how we generally had a wonderful time. Because why go if you're not going to have a wonderful time?

Through a series of coincidences, I have been to [Savannah, Georgia](#), three times in the past year, and each time was even



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better than the last. Filled with huge, gorgeous, live oak trees festooned with Spanish moss, Savannah is a truly lovely and unique city. I honestly didn't realize how unique it was until I visited Charleston recently – also a beautiful and charming Southern city. I thought Charleston and Savannah would be similar. *They are not at all alike.*

I stayed in two different hotels in Savannah and I also stayed over on Tybee Island, which is just a hop, skip, and a jump from the city. In fact, the locals call Tybee Island "Savannah's beach."

The first time we stayed in Savannah, we were in town for the [Tall Ships Challenge](#), which is an incredible story in itself. We were lucky enough to get a room at the [River Street Inn](#). Fronting Bay Street and backing up to scenic River Street, this historic five-story hotel wraps around a central atrium and offers very spacious, lovely rooms. Our first room overlooked River Street and the busy river with ships sailing by. It was incredibly scenic, charming, and very, very noisy. We didn't sleep a wink!

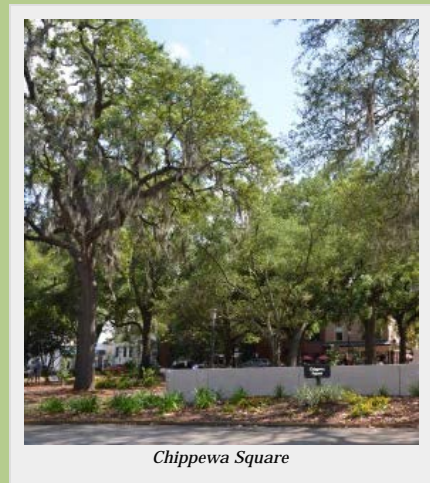


River Street Inn interior

The River Street Inn folks could not have been more accommodating. They immediately moved us to a city-view room that was even bigger, even nicer, and much quieter. Check their "off-peak" rates and special packages. The Inn is in an incredibly convenient location. You can park your car nearby and never use it again until you head home.

And from the Inn, you can spend an afternoon shopping at dozens of interesting little shops on River Street and eating at the many seafood restaurants where the seafood so fresh it was probably caught that same day. Have the grilled shrimp quesadilla at [Spanky's](#) for lunch and you will be delighted, I promise.

Or, walk to [The Pirate's House](#) on Broad Street for their famous buffet lunch and try shrimp and grits for the first time, if you haven't before. You'll love it!



Chippewa Square

But before you start chowing down on the great food in Savannah, you should see the city on one of the trolley tours. There are several companies but I like [Old Town Trolley](#) because they're very reasonably priced, you can hop off and on whenever you want, and the narration is live, not recorded. Hop off and tour the old historic homes, like Girl Scouts' founder [Juliet Gordon Lowe's Birthplace](#), and visit the City Market where you can shop, have lunch, and grab some free samples of the best pecan pralines in the world at [Savannah's Candy Kitchen](#).

The next time we visited Savannah, we stayed at a completely different but equally wonderful hotel: the [Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa](#) on Hutchinson's Island. This resort is so self-sufficient, with its beautiful pool overlooking the river, gorgeous golf course, fabulous restaurants, and comfortable rooms, that you may never want to leave. But when you are ready to check out the rest of Savannah, it's not a problem because there is a [free ferry](#) to take you right over to River Street.

Before you leave the Westin, be sure to enjoy lunch or dinner at the [Aqua Star](#). This lovely restaurant has huge windows overlooking the river and delicious custom-made salads and wraps. They will give you an itemized menu and you choose what you want on your salad or wrap from dozens of ingredient choices.



The Westin from the river

'When you take the ferry over to River Street, find one of the [pedicabs](#) and take a ride around the historic district. It's fun to see the beautiful homes, lush gardens, and distinctive squares from the back of a pedicab as your driver pedals along, giving you a narrated tour t'boot.

If you have some extra time in Savannah, take a drive over to

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View from the Aqua Star restaurant

perfect little Tybee Island. Visit the famous [lighthouse](#) then have lunch at the [Crab Shack](#). Order the “Low Country Boil” and enjoy some of the best shrimp and the sweetest corn on the cob you will ever eat! Then stroll out on Tybee’s Pier, have some ice cream, and pick up some souvenirs in one of the quirky little shops by the pier.

Now you’ve seen the best of Savannah, eaten in some wonderful restaurants, and stayed in two equally wonderful hotels. But you haven’t seen all of Savannah because there is a never ending supply of great restaurants, shopping, and history. So you’ll just have to go back a few times — like me!

What are some of your favorite sights and places in this beautiful Southern city? Please share them with us (including links, if possible) in the Comments section!



Sunset on the river



The Tybee Island Lighthouse

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