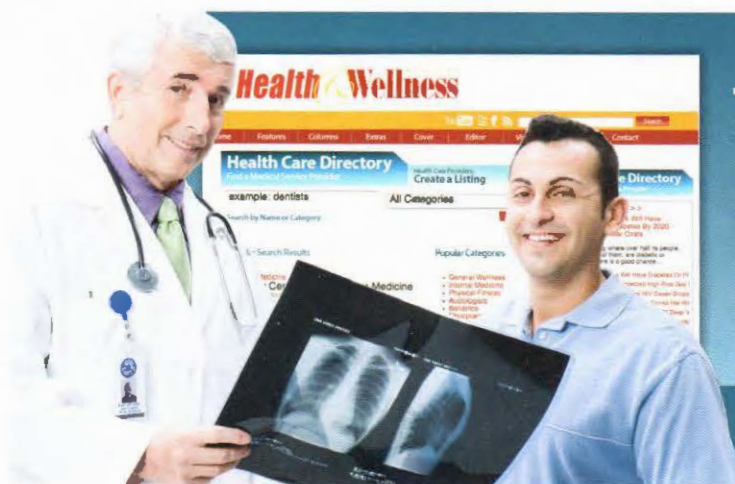




Tybee Island

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by Jan Ross, Staff Writer

I vaguely knew there were barrier islands off the coast of Georgia, but, for years, our beach vacations had been to Pensacola, Florida where my grandmother lived. But when we heard from a friend that Tybee Island, Georgia was beautiful, secluded, and only a 10-hour drive from Lexington, we decided to give it a try. I was immediately sold when I realized that beach houses on Tybee rent for roughly half of what we had been paying in Pensacola. We got a beautiful, 3-bedroom, 2 ½ half bath house with a large screened porch and hot tub which had an easy walk to the beach for only \$2100. There's a variety of accommodations on Tybee and plenty of realtors, but we used Oceanfront Cottage Rentals and were very pleased with their professionalism – they even offered vacation insurance.

You drive through Savannah to get to Tybee Island and what a beautiful city it is! The streets are shaded by huge live oak trees dripping with Spanish moss and the gorgeous historic homes are well-maintained with fabulous gardens. Tybee is actually nicknamed "Savannah's Beach" because it's only about 15 minutes away from Savannah, so it's very easy to take a day off from the beach and take a tour of Savannah, which we did.

We passed through Savannah and headed through the lush green marshes that ring the island and were soon unpacking our cars and lugging coolers, luggage and toys for my grandson in our new home for the week on the North side of the island, which I absolutely recommend for families with children. The South side is much busier with a pier, shops and restaurants and the water is also much rougher.

We couldn't wait to see the beach, so we immediately headed across the



▲ You drive through Savannah to get to Tybee Island and what a beautiful city it is!

wooden sidewalk which became a bridge over a quiet, scenic lagoon. As we neared the lagoon, we were puzzled by all the tiny black shapes poking up out of the water and couldn't imagine what they were. When we got closer, we realized they were the heads of turtles that were lazily floating on the clear, green water – hundreds of them! We found over time that they were pretty laid back until someone appeared on the bridge with bread and then you wouldn't believe how fast those turtles can move! We saved our leftover crusts, crackers and chips and always had a snack for them since my grandson was fascinated by the little green amphibians.

Finally, we made it to the beach and were pleased with the soft, light tan sand, the calm green water and the absolute privacy of the area. Only those people staying in the imme-

diated neighborhood were allowed access to this beach area and it stayed very quiet all week with mostly families and children playing in the water. With four women in our group and one little boy, we decided this was the perfect time to not cook dinner at all – so we ate out every night! We fixed breakfast at the house, took sandwiches and drinks in a cooler to the beach (a cooler on wheels and a small wagon came in very handy) and stuffed ourselves with delicious, local seafood and scrumptious desserts every night. I can highly recommend The Crab Shack, North Beach Grill (live music nightly) and AJ's Dockside Restaurant. We also ate at The Pirate House and The River House in Savannah and they were equally delicious.

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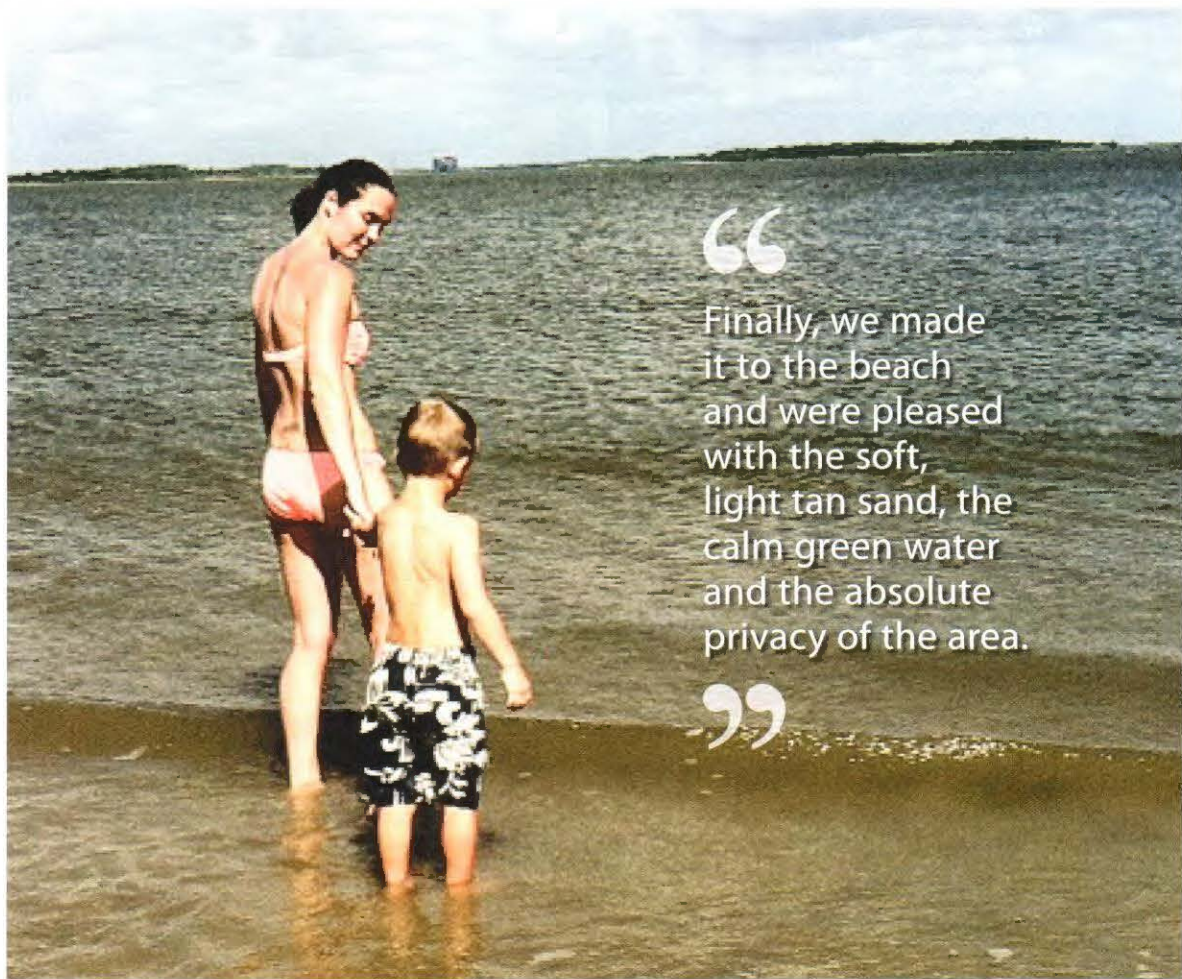
Tybee Island has an historic light-house and they have tours as well as a museum and restored lighthouse keeper's cottage. It was well worth the very reasonable price of \$8 – seniors are only \$6 and kids 5 and under are free. One of the best things we did was take a nature tour of the island with Sundial Charters, which offers guided boat tours of the area. We cruised over to Little Tybee Island, seeing birds and dolphins on the way and then collected sand dollars on the beach.

We also spent a day touring Savannah on trolleys and a river boat and it was wonderful as well. Just make sure you dress very lightly as Savannah is very, very warm in the summer!

We had a great time and are already planning our next trip to Tybee Island!

About the Author

Jan Ross is a freelance writer specializing in travel. You can contact Jan at kentuckygal53@gmail.com with comments or suggestions for article topics.



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