



Southeastern USA

Introduction to the regional listings

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The Southeastern states of Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida comprise a region with strong agrarian and aristocratic tradition.

In the historic-romantic vision of this region, it consists of grand houses with ornate verandas overlooking sweeping green fields, and pillared entrances surrounded by magnolia trees. A pastoral lifestyle and an easygoing hospitality have been hallmarks of the Southern tradition.

Outside the largest cities, there's still a pastoral quality and much natural beauty. Hospitality is still at home here, too. It's hard to take the warm, inclusive "Y'all come" out of the Southern vocabulary.

Another aspect of Southern tradition has been resistance to change. In recent years, however, new sights and new values have come to take their place alongside the older ones. Today's Southerners, far from resisting change, have perhaps participated in more of it than residents of any other U.S. region: the development of the cities, the influx of people from the rest of the country, the new pace of life, and an increasingly cosmopolitan outlook. Corporate towers, avant-garde art, New York or Midwestern accents, and trendy clothing or hairstyles no longer turn heads on city streets here.

But even the biggest cities haven't lost their Southern flavor: A business call, no matter what the size of the business, nearly always involves an exchange of pleasantries, some small talk offered in a natural and gracious manner.

Shelling Your Way Across Sanibel

The Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon sighted Sanibel Island in 1513, while looking for a new source of slaves. Three hundred years later, Gasparilla was said to have used it as a launching base for pirate attacks. Neither Ponce de Leon nor Gasparilla could have predicted one of the major attractions that draws visitors to Sanibel today: seashells. Over 400 varieties of shells wash onto the beaches of this island, making it the number one shelling area in the western hemisphere.

One of the nicest things about collecting seashells is that you can enjoy it right from the start, even if you can't tell a Fighting Conch from a Florida Cone, or a Shark's Eye from a Kitten's Paw. You need nothing more than a swimsuit and a plastic pail. You'll do your most rewarding collecting at low tide. Tide tables are available from many Sanibel business locations. Shelling is at its best in winter, and right after storms.

The Colonial Triangle

Perhaps nowhere else in America will you find such a condensed version of our country's history than in the tiny triangle formed by Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, in eastern Virginia.

Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in America, has been authentically reconstructed. Fifteen timber dwellings, a church, a storehouse, and a guardhouse are again complete with thatched roofs and wattle-and-daub walls.

Of the 500 Colonial-style buildings in Williamsburg, 100 are original structures. In the Capitol, you'll see the room where the Virginia House of Burgesses met. Raleigh Tavern, the town's social center, hosted everything from balls to political meetings. The Governor's Palace was home to seven royal governors, and, following the Revolution, to two governors of Virginia, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson. Walking past the Williamsburg craft shops you can watch a weaver, bootmaker, cabinetmaker, blacksmith, and other artisans create goods for the Colonial household.

The Revolutionary War ended at Yorktown, in 1781. You can climb the fortifications defended by the British, and take a self-guided tour of the battlefield.

The Appalachian Highlands, Rugged and Serene

The Great Smoky Mountains, the magnificent climax to the Appalachian Highlands, form the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee. A smoke-like haze envelopes the mountains, home to unspoiled forests, isolated mountain valleys, and over 1,300 kinds of flowering plants. With outlines softened by a dense forest mantle, the mountains stretch in sweeping troughs and mighty billows to the horizon.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina, and Shenandoah National Park, in Virginia, are joined together by the Blue Ridge Parkway. The speed limit on this road never exceeds 35 miles an hour—it's a road built strictly for tourism, with magnificent viewpoints and historic and natural attractions all along the way.

Start your journey in Asheville, after touring the 255-room Biltmore Mansion. Other sites along your route are the Folk Art Center at Mile 382, the Museum of North Carolina Minerals at Mile 331, the Parkway Craft Center at Mile 294, and Mabry Mill at Mile 176. At Parkway, mountain crafts are demonstrated all summer long, and at Mabry Mill you can buy flour made at the water-powered gristmill and see the working blacksmith shop, sawmill, sorghum press, and still.

The Mountain State

West Virginia is largely unknown to people who have never been there and much loved by people who have. Any straight line drawn across West Virginia is purely theoretical; the Mountain State

is untouchable for dense, green mountain topography, deep forests, winding roads with hairpin turns, and outdoor recreation.

The growth of West Virginia cities has centered on tourism as much as anything else, although the oil and gas fields at Parkersburg, the railroad lines at Huntington, and the coal mining industry have always been important here.

Southern Hospitality: The Real Attraction

One of the main attractions of travel in the South is not an attraction at all - it's simply enjoying the slower pace, hospitality, and natural beauty that the region extends to visitors. Restaurants serve dishes that take a long time to prepare. A walk through a historic district in Savannah or Charleston or New Bern in North Carolina may take twice as long as it would elsewhere, because it includes time to chat, to amble, to comment, to walk into an inviting garden, to stop for a tall, cool drink. A lot of places you can visit in the South have no rush hour, although you can certainly get caught in one in Winston-Salem, Macon, Richmond, Columbia, Norfolk, or Tampa.

History is ever-present in the South. The antebellum culture, with its grace and artistic flair, has left numerous plantation homes as monuments to the lifestyle it supported for a privileged few. These monuments are part of a national heritage, with personal meanings for all who view them.

Ornate gardens, beveled glass, hand-carved moldings, beautiful and unusual windows that capture the lovely Southern light—all of these elements are part of a tour to an antebellum house museum. Cities like Savannah, Charleston, and St. Augustine, and restored areas like Colonial Williamsburg attract thousands of delighted visitors each year. Y'all come!

The Big Events - The Southeast

Late January-Mid-February, Speed Weeks

Daytona International Speedway, P. O. Box S, Daytona Beach, FL 32015; (904) 254-6767

Month of March, Springfest

Springfest, P.O. Box 5278, Hilton Head Island, SC 29938; (803) 842-3378

Early July, Mountain State Arts and Crafts Fair

Mountain State Arts and Crafts Fair, Ripple, WV 25271; (304) 372-7000

Mid-July, Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and Gathering of Scottish Clans

Grandfather Mountain, P. O. Box 995, Linville, NC 28646; (704) 733-2013

Late July, Chincoteague Pony Penning

Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, R 0. Box 258, Chincoteague, VA 23336; (804) 336-6161

Late September, Atlanta Arts Festival

Arts Festival, 1404 Spring St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30339; (404) 885-1125