

Thoroughbred Country, South Carolina

Charming towns with museums that display local history; small main street businesses with antiques and uniques; lanes lined with live oak trees and decorated with Spanish moss; nationally-known artists; picturesque rivers; cotton, peach, watermelon and grain farms; historic plantation homes, churches and cemeteries, unique cultural communities and natural attractions ... all come together to give you a true picture of the South of yesteryear and of today. Welcome to Thoroughbred Country, South Carolina - Way More Than Horses!

Day 1:

Enjoy downtown Aiken. The City grew up along the Charleston-Hamburg Railway. As Aiken became a bustling railroad town, it began to draw wealthy Northerners and Charlestonians during the winter months. Surrounded by a one of a kind parkway system and bordered by beautiful beds of flowers, this area offers unique dining and shopping choices. The area is also home to the Aiken Center for the Arts and the Aiken County Historical Museum.

Insider tip - board the Aiken Trolley on Saturday to experience Aiken on this guided tour. Reservations are a must and a fee is charged.



Explore the Aiken County Historical Museum. The Museum is located in Banksia, one of only two Winter Colony mansions open to the public. Three floors of exhibits tell the story of the Aiken area from past to present including the present day mission of the Savannah River Site. The grounds house the Transit of Venus Observatory structure, a circa 1808 log home and an 1890's one room schoolhouse.

Insider tip - admission to this grand treasure is free!

Finish the day with a picnic and paddle on the Edisto River canoe trail at Aiken State Natural Area. The Edisto River is North America's longest free flowing blackwater river. **Insider tip - canoes are available for rent with advance notice.**



Day 2:

Travel to North Augusta's Living History Park. At the park entrance, stroll the accessible Sensory Garden. During the year, the park hosts several special events where colonial life can be experienced firsthand. Explore the meeting house, backwoods cabin, smoke house, blacksmith forge stage and tavern all in a Colonial setting. **Insider tip – the park is also a geo-caching site.**

Stop at the Beech Island Historical Society Visitors and History Center. The center is located in a renovated country store that tells the history of the Beech Island area. Beech Island is one of the oldest settlements in South Carolina. Indian trading paths, Fort Moore and Swiss settlers are a few of the things you'll learn about here.



Plan to visit Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site in Beech Island. This 1850 Greek revival antebellum mansion was the home of SC Governor James Henry Hammond. The house was held by the Hammond family through four generations then donated to the State Park Service in 1975. It is complete with furniture, decorative arts and artwork from the various periods. The grounds include interpretive slave quarters.

Insider tip - house tours are held on the hour Thursday through Monday at 1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm. A fee is charged.

Go birding at the Silver Bluff Audubon Center & Sanctuary located on the Savannah River in Jackson. Silver Bluff is a 3,154 acre wildlife sanctuary owned by the National Audubon Society. **Insider tip – there are over 200 species on their checklist.**

Treat yourself to dinner and spend the remainder of your evening star-gazing at the planetarium or enjoying a live performance event. A night's rest can be found at one of the many historic inns.

Day 3:

After breakfast, travel east toward Blackville along US 78, the Discovery Route for the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (SCNHC). As you travel you will notice the rail bed that is still evident in many of the small towns. These towns grew up along the Charleston-Hamburg Railway - the first commercial railway in America and the longest commercial railway in the world at the time. Make a stop at the Williston Museum, view local exhibits and discover why Williston was the Asparagus Capital of the World. **Insider tip – be sure to stop and tour the Agricultural Heritage Museum to learn of the region's rich agricultural heritage. Admission to both these museums is free!**



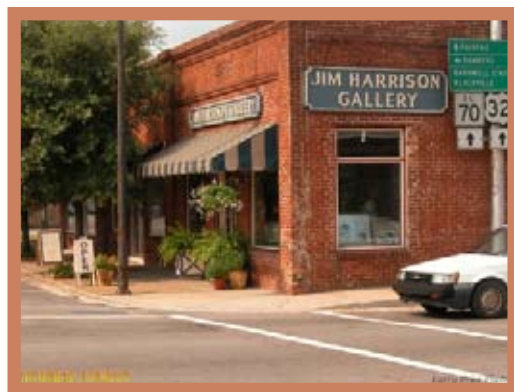
Continue to Blackville to learn about Mennonite history and culture. Enjoy lunch at Miller's Bread Basket restaurant. Miller's is a popular stop and offers Pennsylvania Dutch with a Southern touch fare. No meal is complete without a slice of homemade bread or pie. **Insider tip – order the shoo-fly pie, a local favorite.**



Detour three miles north of Blackville to the Healing Springs. Indians believed in the springs' natural healing powers and brought wounded Revolutionary War soldiers here to drink. **Insider tip – contact Blackville Historical Tours to receive a guided tour.**

Follow the history of the Charleston-Hamburg to Denmark. Shop for quality antiques in an elegant setting at The Caroline Collection. This historic AT&T building houses three full floors. The Jim Harrison Gallery affords opportunities for the viewer to take a walk down memory lane to a kinder, gentler time.

Insider tip - Nelson's Wee Bake Bakery has a variety of Mennonite treats.



The 1830's South Carolina Canal and Railroad bed that carried the first steam engine, The Best Friend, runs through the middle of Bamberg's Historic District. A walking or driving tour can be purchased at the Main Street Market along with homemade gift items. Travel south to Ehrhardt (on US 601) for an overnight stay at a local bed and breakfast where you will hear stories of the community's German heritage. Their annual Schuetzenfest occurs in August. **Insider tip - "Cotton the World Over" mural is located in the lobby of the Bamberg Post Office.**

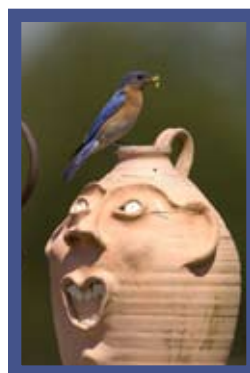
Day 4:

Begin your day with a visit to Rivers Bridge State Historic Site outside of Ehrhardt. Rivers Bridge is a 390-acre Civil War battlefield managed by the State Park Service. The site includes the self-guided battlefield interpretive trail and memorial grounds. It was here that a small band of Confederate soldiers in field fortifications opposed the advance of Sherman's army. The well-preserved earthen fortifications are the centerpiece of this important battlefield landscape. **Insider tip - Rivers Bridge also preserves and interprets the Memorial Grounds where Confederate dead from that two-day struggle are interred.**





Continue on to Allendale and shop at the Salkehatchie Arts Center. The center exhibits and sells various types of art created by over 90 regional artisans. Visit the Center's history room to learn more about the rich heritage of this region along the Salkehatchie River. **Insider tip - Center is closed Sunday and Monday.**



Grab a sandwich and travel to Barnwell for history and shopping on the Circle. Be sure to check the time at the unique vertical sundial. Legend has it this is the only vertical sundial in the United States and it keeps within two minutes of standard time. Visit the Barnwell County Museum or The Little Red Barn Pottery and Art Gallery to shop for pottery and nature photography before enjoying dinner. Check out the schedule for the Circle Theater for evening performances.



Grab your fishing pole, pull up a chair and spend the night in one of the cabins at Barnwell State Park or bring your own horse and enjoy horse camping around the fire at Lakeview Plantation or Broxton Bridge Plantation.

Insider tip - The Allendale Paleoamerican Expedition is a field program where members of the public can register for a week and help excavate one of North America's most ancient archaeological sites associated with several prehistoric chert quarries. The expedition takes place in May.

Call for a free travel guide: 1-888-834-1654
Visit our website at: www.tbredcountry.org
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