



Historic homes and gardens line the shore in Charleston, South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA/GEORGIA/FLORIDA

CHARLESTON AND THE LOWCOUNTRY CRUISE

Antebellum mansions, unspoiled beaches, and tree-shaded waterways are hallmarks of this trip.

This ravishing realm of sea islands, gracious antebellum towns, and wildlife-filled salt marshes is known as the Lowcountry—one of the United States' most mysterious and compelling regions. The ship is small—more a large motor yacht than a cruise liner—and the scale of things intimate as you head south from historic Charleston, hugging the shoreline along the blue highway of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. The ship puts into Beaufort, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, where the 19th-century mansions of rice and cotton barons line narrow lanes shaded by moss-draped oaks. Beyond, you sail past vast salt marshes where egrets and herons wade, and myriad waterways trace sinuous curves through stands of golden cordgrass. Here and there, you glimpse an antebellum plantation house surrounded by its gardens. Farther south, you reach Georgia's wild and beautiful Sea Islands, with long pristine beaches. They were once a summer retreat for the rich and, on Jekyll Island, you can tour the lavish seaside "cottages" of families like the Vanderbilts, Morgans, and Pulitzers.

When to Go Most cruises depart in April, a beautiful time of year, when the exquisite gardens of Charleston and Savannah are in bloom.

How Long 250 miles (402 km) on a seven-day, eight-night cruise between Charleston, SC, and Jacksonville, FL.

Planning Historic Charleston is one of the most popular destinations in the southeast, and if you have an extra day or two in your schedule, include plans to explore more of the elegant historic district and savor the gracious lifestyle.

Inside Information April weather offers warm days, cool breezes, and low humidity. Wear comfortable walking shoes and have good binoculars onboard for bird-watching, especially in the Sea Islands.

Website www.cruisewest.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- Shop at the old **Charleston Market**, where Gullah women—descendants of freed slaves—sell intricately woven **sweetgrass baskets** and other crafts.
- The romantic charm of **Beaufort, SC**, makes it a favorite with movie directors—scenes from *The Big Chill* and *Forrest Gump* were shot here. Get an ice cream at **Southern Sweets**, and enjoy it on the porch swings that line the waterfront.
- Stroll along the cobblestone streets of old **Savannah, GA**, past 18th- and 19th-century mansions.
- Sample the bounty of **shrimp, crabs**, and **oysters** harvested in local waters.

