

36 HOURS

# Charleston, S.C.

By Ariel Felton Photographs by Hunter McRae Sep. 14, 2023

When most people think of Charleston, South Carolina's oldest city, they often picture its walkable downtown, with its cobblestones, Colonial architecture and horse-drawn carriages. But beyond the historic district, you'll find small islands with coastal views and waterways, and neighborhoods with their own wealth of history. While the city's pivotal role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade continues to spark debate about how much to focus on that narrative for visitors, an answer has arrived in the International African American Museum, a \$120 million project that opened in June after 20 years in the making. Charleston has been accused of being obsessed with history; in reality, it's an evolving city amid a tourism boom that is striving to use the past to inform its future.

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7 p.m. Dig into seafood right on the water

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Fleet Landing Restaurant and Bar is housed in a massive 1940s former naval building with views of the Charleston harbor. The double-sided bar has both indoor and outdoor seating, and the patio wraps around the building. Fleet Landing serves Southern seafood favorites like Carolina lump crab cakes (\$32), and pan-roasted salmon with a side of Lowcountry grits (\$28). The 6,000-square-foot establishment is as big as it is popular, so large parties should reserve in advance. The food, plus the sunset view of the Cooper River, makes Fleet Landing worth navigating the crowd.

