

DESTINATION GHOST TOURS PRESENTS

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# SAVANNAH

## GEORGIA

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*The Complete First-Timer's Guide*

*History • Getting Here • Getting Around • Where to Stay Where to Eat • What to Do • Haunted Savannah •  
Practical Tips*

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## CHAPTER 1

# Welcome to Savannah — A Brief History

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Savannah is one of the most beautiful, most historic, and most hauntingly atmospheric cities in the United States. Whether you're here for the architecture, the food, the ghost stories, or simply to wander — this city will get under your skin in the best possible way.

## The Founding

On February 12, 1733, British General James Edward Oglethorpe arrived on the bluffs above the Savannah River with 114 colonists aboard the ship *Anne*. He established the 13th and final American colony of Georgia, forging a critical peace treaty with Yamacraw Chief Tomochichi that would shape the city's early years. Oglethorpe's revolutionary city plan — a repeating grid of streets, blocks, and open public squares — was unlike anything in the colonial world and is still remarkably intact today.

## The Ward System & The Squares

Oglethorpe's master plan divided the city into 'wards,' each centered on a public square surrounded by civic buildings and residential lots. Originally 24 squares were built; 22 survive today. These squares are the soul of Savannah — shaded by ancient live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, adorned with fountains and monuments, and beloved by residents and visitors alike. No two squares are quite the same.

## Growth, War & Survival

Savannah grew into one of the most prosperous port cities in the South, trading cotton, rice, and timber. It survived the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and saw fierce fighting during the Civil War. In December 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman completed his famous March to the Sea and — rather than burn Savannah as he had burned Atlanta — sent President Lincoln a telegram gifting him the city as a Christmas present. That decision preserved Savannah's stunning collection of antebellum architecture for generations to come.

## Yellow Fever & the Haunted History

Beauty and darkness have always coexisted in Savannah. The city was devastated by yellow fever epidemics throughout the 18th and 19th centuries — in 1820 alone, roughly 10% of the population died. Bodies were buried throughout the city, sometimes in unmarked graves beneath what are now parks, homes, and streets. The Colonial Park Cemetery, established in 1750, holds the remains of many of Savannah's earliest residents. It is widely believed that Savannah's troubled history — the wars, epidemics, and tragedies — is precisely why so many spirits are said to linger here. Savannah is consistently ranked as one of the most haunted cities in America.

*“Behind the beauty, there is a lot of dark history. Savannah is one of the most haunted cities in the United States.”*

## CHAPTER 2

# Getting to Savannah

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## By Air

Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV) is a small, easy-to-navigate airport located about 15 minutes west of the Historic District. It's served by most major airlines including American, Delta, United, Southwest, and several regional carriers. The airport is stress-free by comparison to most major hubs — one of the genuine pleasures of flying into a smaller city.

### ✈️ ■ Airport Address

Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV) 400 Airways Avenue, Savannah, GA 31408 • (912) 964-0514 From the airport to downtown: ~15–20 min by car • Uber/Lyft readily available

From the airport, rideshare (Uber/Lyft) to the Historic District typically runs \$20–\$35 depending on traffic. Rental cars are also available at the airport. There is no direct public transit connection between the airport and downtown, though some hotels offer shuttle service — always worth asking when you book.

## By Car

Savannah sits right on I-95, the major north-south interstate along the East Coast, making it an easy road trip destination. I-16 connects Savannah directly to Atlanta (about 4 hours west). From major cities: Charleston, SC is about 2 hours north; Jacksonville, FL is about 2.5 hours south; Charlotte, NC is about 5 hours north.

## By Train

Amtrak's Silver Service/Palmetto lines stop in Savannah at the Savannah Amtrak Station (2611 Seaboard Coastline Drive). The station is about 3 miles from the Historic District — a quick Uber or taxi ride. Trains connect Savannah to New York, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and points south to Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami.

## By Bus

Greyhound and FlixBus serve Savannah. The Greyhound station (610 W Oglethorpe Ave) is conveniently located at the western edge of the Historic District — walkable to most downtown hotels.

CHAPTER 3

# The Historic District — Know Your City

Understanding Savannah’s layout will transform your visit. This isn’t a city you can figure out from behind a car window — it rewards walkers, wanderers, and those willing to turn down an unfamiliar lane.

## The Boundaries

The Historic District is roughly bounded by the Savannah River to the north, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the west, East Broad Street to the east, and Gwinnett Street to the south (which runs through the southern half of Forsyth Park). This compact area is where you’ll spend the majority of your time.

## The Key Streets

Street	Why It Matters
Bull Street	The main north-south spine, passing through the most beautiful squares including Johnson, Wright, Chippewa, Madison, and Monterey. Walk the full length.
Broughton Street	Savannah’s main shopping and dining corridor. Boutiques, restaurants, Leopold’s Ice Cream, and the iconic marquee of the Trustees Theatre.
River Street	The original commercial waterfront, now lined with shops, restaurants, and bars. Cobblestoned and energetic.
Jones Street	Often called the most beautiful street in America — tree-canopied, quiet, and lined with immaculate 19th-century townhomes.
Congress Street	Runs east-west through the heart of the Historic District, home to City Market and great restaurants.
Bay Street	Runs parallel to the river along the top of the bluff, with great views toward the Savannah River.

## The Districts

### ■■ Historic District

Your home base. The 22 squares, antebellum mansions, Broughton Street shopping, River Street, City Market, and the majority of hotels and restaurants. Most visitors never need to leave this area.

### ■ Starland District

South of Forsyth Park. Savannah’s artsy, eclectic neighborhood with murals, indie boutiques, local restaurants, and coffee shops. A more local, relaxed vibe than the tourist-heavy Historic District.

### ■ Plant Riverside District

West along the riverfront. A newer, upscale development anchored by the JW Marriott. Rooftop bars, live music venues, and trendy restaurants with great river views.

### ■ Victorian District

Just south of the Historic District. Beautiful Victorian-era homes and quieter streets. Where Forsyth Park lives in its full splendor.

### ■ Tybee Island

Not a district but worth mentioning — Savannah's beach is just 18 miles east (about 30 minutes). A classic, low-key Georgia beach town perfect for a day trip.

## CHAPTER 4

# Getting Around Town

Here is the single best piece of advice we can give you: leave your car parked and walk. Savannah's Historic District is compact, flat, and endlessly rewarding on foot. The grid system is logical and easy to navigate, and you will discover details you'd miss entirely from a vehicle. That said, you have excellent options when your feet need a rest.

## Walking

The Historic District is approximately 2.5 miles from River Street in the north to the southern end of Forsyth Park. Most visitors log 5–10 miles per day without trying. Wear comfortable shoes — the cobblestones are authentic and unforgiving on heels or thin soles. The squares are your navigation points; learn a few key ones and you'll never feel lost.

## The Downtowner — Free On-Demand Rides

The City of Savannah's Downtowner is a free, on-demand electric vehicle shuttle covering much of downtown. Download the app or request a ride online at [ridedowntowner.com/savannah](http://ridedowntowner.com/savannah). It operates during evening hours and is a fantastic option for getting between the Historic District, River Street, and nearby areas without bothering with parking.

## CAT Bus & Dot Shuttle

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) provides public bus service throughout Savannah and Chatham County for just \$1.50 per ride. The free DOT (Downtown Connector) shuttle loops through the Historic District with stops near major attractions and parking garages. See [connectonthedot.com](http://connectonthedot.com) for routes, schedules, and stops.

## Hop-On, Hop-Off Trolley

Old Town Trolley Tours and other operators run hop-on, hop-off narrated trolleys through the Historic District. These are an excellent choice for your first morning in the city — you'll get a full orientation and historical overview in about 90 minutes, with the ability to disembark at any stop and reboard later. Trolleys run every 15–20 minutes. Book in advance, especially in spring and summer.

Option	Cost	Best For	Contact
Walking	Free	Everything in the Historic District	—
The Downtowner	Free	Evening rides around downtown	<a href="http://ridedowntowner.com">ridedowntowner.com</a>
DOT Shuttle	Free	Historic District loops & parking garages	<a href="http://connectonthedot.com">connectonthedot.com</a>
CAT Bus	\$1.50/ride	Getting beyond downtown	<a href="http://catchacat.org">catchacat.org</a>
Hop-On Trolley	\$30–40/person	Day 1 orientation tour	<a href="http://trolleytours.com">trolleytours.com</a>

Pedicab	Varies (tip well!)	Short hops, fun rides	<a href="http://savannahpedicab.com">savannahpedicab.com</a>
Moke/Golf Cart	\$50–\$150/hour	Cruising in style	<a href="http://posh-carts.com">posh-carts.com</a>
Bike Rental	\$20–30/day	Covering more ground	<a href="http://savannahonwheels.com">savannahonwheels.com</a>
Segway Tour	\$30–60/person	Guided historical tours	<a href="http://savannahsegway.com">savannahsegway.com</a>
Uber / Lyft	Varies	Late nights, airport, longer hauls	App

CHAPTER 5

# Parking — The Complete Guide

If you're driving to Savannah, here is everything you need to know. The Historic District can be tricky during busy periods, but there are always options if you know where to look.

## The Golden Rule: Park Once, Walk Everywhere

The smartest strategy is to park in a garage as soon as you arrive and leave your car there for your entire stay. The Historic District is walkable enough that you simply don't need a car once you're in. Moving your car between attractions will only cause frustration.

## When Parking Is Free

Sunday is free all day everywhere. On weekdays and Saturdays, meters are enforced Monday–Saturday 8am–8pm north of Liberty Street, and Monday–Friday 8am–5pm south of Liberty Street. Parking is also free on city holidays including Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other government holidays.

## Visitor Parking Passes

The best-value option for multi-day visitors is the Visitor Day Pass, which allows unlimited parking in all city-owned garages and metered spaces (time limit 1+ hour). It cannot be used in private lots. Passes are available at:

- Mobility & Parking Services, 100 E. Bryan Street — Mon–Fri 8am–4:30pm • (912) 651-6470
- Visitor Center, 301 MLK Blvd — Mon–Fri 8:30am–5pm, Sat–Sun 9am–5pm • (912) 944-0455
- Some downtown hotels — ask at check-in

### ■ Visitor Pass Pricing

\$15 for a 24-hour pass • \$24 for a 48-hour pass Valid in all city-owned garages and most metered spaces. Not valid in private lots.

## The 5 City-Owned Parking Garages

Garage	Address	Hours	Daily Rate	Notes
Bryan Street Garage	100 E. Bryan St.	Open daily	\$1–2/hr, max \$10/day	Home of Parking Services office. Central location near Reynolds Square.
Liberty Street Garage	401 W. Liberty St.	Sun–Fri 5am–1am Sat 5am–3am	\$1/hr, max \$10/day Evenings Mon–Fri: \$2 flat Weekends: \$1/day	Near Forsyth Park. Great for south Historic District. Easy highway access.

Robinson Garage	132 Montgomery St.	Open 24/7	\$1/hr, max \$10/day Evenings Mon–Fri: \$2 flat Weekends: \$3/day	Right off I-16. Perfectly located behind Broughton Street. One of the best options.
State Street Garage	100 E. State St.	Sun–Fri 5am–1am Sat 5am–5pm	\$1/hr, max \$10/day Evenings: \$2 flat Weekends: \$3/day Sat, \$1/day Sun	At Abercorn & State. Central to the east side of the Historic District.
Whitaker Street Garage	7 Whitaker St.	Open 24/7	Varies	Near Bay Street and River Street. Convenient for waterfront dining.

### Additional Parking Options

Location	Address	Notes
Visitor Center Lot	301 MLK Blvd.	First hour free, then \$1/hr. Complimentary for trolley tour ticket holders.
Lincoln Street Garage	20 Lincoln St.	Convenient for the eastern Historic District.
River Street Lots	3 small lots along River St.	Limited spaces. Popular for waterfront visits but fill fast on weekends.
Civic Center Lot	Near MLK Blvd.	Enforced 24/7. Convenient for western Historic District.

### Street Parking & Meters

Metered street parking runs \$1–\$2 per hour depending on location. The \$2/hr zones are the busiest areas (near the river, Broughton Street, Bay Street, and City Market). Outer streets like Tattall Street on the western edge offer 4–5 hour meters for \$1/hr. Download the ParkSavannah app ([parksav.net](http://parksav.net)) to pay for metered parking from your phone and extend your time remotely. Give yourself an extra 15 minutes on busy days.

#### ■■ Towing & Booting

Vehicles parked illegally or with unpaid tickets may be booted or towed. If booted: Do NOT remove it yourself. Call (912) 651-6470 (business hours) or (912) 651-6477 (after 5pm). If towed: Same numbers above, or call Savannah-Chatham Police at (912) 651-6476.

## CHAPTER 6

# Where to Stay

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Savannah has one of the most exceptional lodging scenes in the South — from grand historic inns to sleek new luxury hotels, to charming B&Bs; set in 19th-century mansions. Staying in the Historic District puts everything within walking distance, which is strongly recommended for first-timers.

## Luxury & Boutique Hotels

### ★ Hotel Bardo Savannah — 601 Drayton St.

Opened 2024. Savannah's newest and most talked-about luxury hotel, directly across from Forsyth Park. Member of Leading Hotels of the World. Stunning courtyard, pool, and Saint Bibiana restaurant on-site. 149 rooms including 20 suites.

### ★ The Gastonian — 220 E. Gaston St.

An intimate, acclaimed inn set across two restored 1868 Italianate mansions. Known for exceptional service, lavish breakfasts, and fine period furnishings. One of the top-rated B&Bs; in the Southeast.

### ★ Kehoe House — 123 Habersham St.

Adults-only B&B; housed in an 1892 Renaissance Revival mansion on Columbia Square. Free WiFi, included breakfast, and a gorgeous common room. One of Savannah's most photographed inns.

### ★ Perry Lane Hotel — 256 E. Perry Lane

A stylish, modern boutique hotel tucked into the Historic District. Rooftop bar with views, a lovely pool, and an excellent restaurant. Popular with a younger, design-conscious crowd.

### ★ JW Marriott Plant Riverside — 1 Plant Riverside Dr.

The anchor of the Plant Riverside District. Spectacular riverfront setting with multiple bars and restaurants, live music, and panoramic Savannah River views. A destination in itself.

### ★ The Mansion on Forsyth Park — 700 Drayton St.

A Autograph Collection hotel set in a Victorian mansion directly on Forsyth Park. Art-filled, dramatic, and deeply Savannah. The 700 Drayton restaurant is a gem.

## Historic Inns & B&Bs;

### ★ Hamilton-Turner Inn — 330 Abercorn St.

A stunning 1873 Second Empire mansion on Lafayette Square. Known as one of Savannah's most beautiful and most haunted buildings. Gorgeous rooms, included breakfast, and right in the heart of the Historic District.

### ★ Eliza Thompson House — 5 W. Jones St.

Set on the legendary Jones Street in two 1847 townhouses. Beautifully restored with a lovely courtyard garden. Complimentary wine and evening reception included.

★ **The Marshall House — 123 E. Broughton St.**

Savannah's oldest operating hotel (opened 1851), located right on Broughton Street. A landmark property with excellent on-site dining. Also reputedly one of the most haunted hotels in the city.

★ **Planters Inn — 29 Abercorn St.**

A refined boutique hotel on Reynolds Square, adjacent to Abercorn Street. The location is excellent — walking distance to everything.

★ **President's Quarters Inn — 225 E. President St.**

A charming inn comprised of two 1855 townhouses near Oglethorpe Square. Known for its warm hospitality and included full breakfast.

★ **17Hundred90 Inn & Restaurant — 307 E. President St.**

Savannah's oldest inn, dating to 1790. Famous for its resident ghost, Anna. A truly atmospheric, historic property with a beloved on-site restaurant.

## Full-Service Hotels

For a more conventional hotel experience, these properties are well-regarded and excellently located:

- The DeSoto — 15 E. Liberty St. Full-service hotel with pool, on Bull Street.
- Hampton Inn Historic District — 201 E. Bay St. Clean, comfortable, good location.
- Hyatt Regency Savannah — 2 W. Bay St. Riverfront location with stunning lobby atrium.
- Embassy Suites Historic District — 605 W. Oglethorpe Ave. Suites with free breakfast.
- River Street Inn — 115 E. River St. Premier riverfront boutique hotel.
- Hilton Garden Inn Historic District — 321 W. Bay St. Solid choice near Plant Riverside.
- DoubleTree by Hilton — 411 W. Bay St. Well-located, dependable, and pet-friendly.
- East Bay Inn — 225 E. Bay St. Small boutique hotel in a 19th-century cotton warehouse.

### ■ Pro Tip: Parking at Your Hotel

Many Historic District hotels charge \$25–\$50/day for parking. Before booking, check if your hotel has parking and what it costs. In many cases, it's cheaper to park in a nearby city garage for the duration of your stay. Always ask.

## CHAPTER 7

## Where to Eat — The Best Restaurants

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Savannah's food scene is extraordinary — a genuine culinary destination that punches well above its weight for a city of its size. The city blends deeply rooted Lowcountry and Southern cooking traditions with an increasingly sophisticated and innovative restaurant culture. Our strongest advice: always choose local over chains.

### Fine Dining & Special Occasions

#### ★ **The Grey — 109 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.**

James Beard Award-winning. Housed in a beautifully restored 1938 Greyhound bus terminal, Chef Mashama Bailey weaves African influences through Southern traditions. The most acclaimed restaurant in Savannah. Reservations book months in advance for dinner (Tue–Sat) and Sunday brunch. Do not skip this.

#### ★ **The Olde Pink House — 23 Abercorn St.**

Savannah's most iconic dining room — a 1771 Georgian mansion painted blush pink. Beloved for crispy scored flounder, shrimp and grits, and pecan-crust chicken. The basement Planters Tavern has live music nightly. Reservations essential.

#### ★ **Elizabeth on 37th — 105 E. 37th St.**

An institution since 1981, set in a Starland District mansion with a gorgeous garden. Contemporary coastal cuisine with an extraordinary wine cellar of 10,000+ bottles. Prix fixe and seasonal menus. Call (912) 236-5547.

#### ★ **Saint Bibiana at Hotel Bardo — 601 Drayton St.**

The buzzy restaurant at Hotel Bardo serves coastal Italian fare through a Southern lens. Handmade pasta, local seafood, and a beautiful dining room. Weekend brunch has become the hottest reservation in town.

#### ★ **Local 11ten — 1110 Bull St.**

Contemporary Southern cuisine in a beautifully restored 1950s bank, just south of Forsyth Park. Executive Chef Jake Rogers focuses on day-boat seafood and local farms. PERCH, the rooftop bar above, is not to be missed.

### Classic Savannah Dining

#### ★ **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room — 107 W. Jones St.**

A Savannah institution since 1943. Family-style Southern cooking served at communal tables — fried chicken, collard greens, black-eyed peas, cornbread, and more passed around in bowls. Lunch only, Mon–Fri. The line starts early and moves fast.

#### ★ **Crystal Beer Parlor — 301 W. Jones St.**

Open since 1933 — the longest continuously operating restaurant in Savannah. Famous for the best shrimp and grits in the city, along with craft beers and a classic tavern atmosphere. Casual, beloved, essential.

★ **B. Matthew’s Eatery** — 325 E. Bay St.

Beloved local spot for breakfast and lunch. Excellent shrimp and grits, creative egg dishes, and one of the best brunch experiences in the Historic District. Expect a wait on weekends — worth it.

★ **Common Restaurant** — 130 E. Broughton St.

Elevated Lowcountry cuisine on Broughton Street with stunning views of the Marshall House. Winner of Wine Spectator’s Best of Award of Excellence four consecutive years (2022–2025). Beautiful space and excellent service.

**Casual & Local Favorites**

- Cotton & Rye (1801 Habersham St.) — Creative Lowcountry cooking in Starland District
- Savannah Seafood Shack (115 W. River St.) — Casual waterfront seafood on River Street
- Trelor Park (115 E. Bay St.) — Irreverent, fun, excellent craft cocktails and comfort food
- Zunzi’s (108 E. York St.) — Famous South African-inspired sandwiches, cash only, long lines
- Ardsley Station (1802 Bull St.) — Best Starland District restaurant, great happy hour
- Foxy Loxy Cafe (1919 Bull St.) — Beloved coffee shop and taqueria south of Forsyth Park
- Wright Square Bistro (11 W. York St.) — Seasonal Southern food right off Wright Square
- Bull Street Tacos (1 W. Park Ave.) — Just south of Forsyth, casual and delicious

**Sweet Treats & Coffee**

- Leopold’s Ice Cream (212 E. Broughton St.) — The most famous spot in Savannah. Family-owned since 1919, homemade ice cream, celebrity sightings, and always a line. Non-negotiable.
- Savannah Candy Kitchen (225 E. River St.) — Pralines, taffy, fudge, and every sweet Southern confection you can imagine. The free samples are dangerous.
- Auspicious Baking Co. — Outstanding artisan bakery with sourdough, pastries, and seasonal specials.
- The Collins Quarter (151 Bull St.) — Australian-inspired cafe with exceptional coffee and brunch.

■ **Reservations: Plan Ahead!**

The Grey, Olde Pink House, Elizabeth on 37th, and Saint Bibiana all require reservations weeks or months in advance. Use Resy or OpenTable. For walk-ins, arrive at opening (usually 5pm for dinner) and put your name in immediately.

## CHAPTER 8

# Bars, Nightlife & the Open Container Law

## The Open Container Law — Savannah's Famous Perk

This is one of the things that makes Savannah genuinely unique. In the Historic District, you are legally allowed to walk the streets with an alcoholic beverage in hand — but only in a clear plastic cup. Glass bottles and cans are not permitted outside. Ask any bar to pour your drink into a to-go cup before you leave. Most will provide one automatically. Always carry your photo ID — nearly every establishment cards regardless of age.

*“Savannah is one of the only cities in the US where you can legally stroll down a beautiful historic square with a cocktail in hand. Embrace it — responsibly.”*

## Best Bars & Nightlife Spots

### ★ Planters Tavern (basement of Olde Pink House) — 23 Abercorn St.

Live piano, historic atmosphere, excellent bourbon selection. One of the best bars in the South. Gets crowded — arrive early or wait.

### ★ Rocks on the Roof (Bohemian Hotel) — 102 W. Bay St.

Rooftop bar overlooking the Savannah River. Spectacular views, cold drinks, great vibe at sunset. One of the most scenic spots in the city.

### ★ Artillery Bar — 307 Bull St.

Sophisticated cocktail bar in a stunning historic space on Madison Square. Arguably the best craft cocktail program in Savannah. Not cheap, but worth it.

### ★ Alley Cat Lounge — 311 W. Congress St.

Laid-back, beloved neighborhood bar in City Market. Great rotating cocktail menu including excellent mocktails. Consistently packed.

### ★ Wet Willie's — 101 E. River St.

The River Street institution. Famous for frozen ‘Call-A-Cab’ slushie cocktails and a party atmosphere. Perfect for to-go cups on the waterfront.

### ★ Joe & Vera's — Historic District

Parisian-inspired cocktail lounge. Light fare including oysters and tartare. Sophisticated and stylish.

### ★ Perch Rooftop (atop Local 11ten) — 1110 Bull St.

Treetop rooftop bar south of Forsyth Park. Gorgeous views, craft cocktails, and a more local, less touristy crowd.

## City Market

City Market (Jefferson & Congress Streets) is Savannah's central entertainment hub — an open-air complex with bars, restaurants, live music, galleries, and shops. Almost every evening you'll find live music spilling out into the courtyard. It's lively, accessible, and fun for all ages.

## CHAPTER 9

# Must-See Attractions & Things to Do

## The Squares

Do not rush the squares. Savannah's 22 surviving squares are its greatest treasure — each one unique, each one worth sitting in for a while. Here are the unmissables:

Square	Why It's Special
Forsyth Park	Not a square but the city's beloved green heart. The iconic white fountain, live oak canopy, and 30 acres of gorgeous parkland. Go first thing in the morning.
Chippewa Square	Where Forrest Gump sat on his famous bench (the bench is now in the Savannah History Museum). Beautiful and central on Bull Street.
Monterey Square	Anchored by the Mercer Williams House, subject of <i>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</i> . One of the most atmospheric squares in the city.
Lafayette Square	Home to the Cathedral Basilica of St. John the Baptist — the most stunning building in Savannah, with breathtaking Gothic Revival architecture.
Columbia Square	Home to the Kehoe House and the Davenport House Museum. Quiet and beautiful.
Madison Square	Site of the Siege of Savannah in 1779. Flanked by beautiful mansions and the Sorrel-Weed House.
Reynolds Square	Home to a statue of John Wesley, founder of Methodism. Adjacent to the Planters Inn.
Johnson Square	Savannah's oldest and largest square, anchored by a monument to Nathanael Greene.

## Museums & Historic Sites

- Savannah History Museum (303 MLK Blvd.) — Excellent overview of the city's history. Home to the original Forrest Gump bench.
- Owens-Thomas House & Slave Quarters (124 Abercorn St.) — One of the finest Regency architecture examples in the US, with a powerful slave quarters exhibit.
- Mercer Williams House Museum (429 Bull St.) — The house at the center of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Fascinating tours.
- Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace (10 E. Oglethorpe Ave.) — The founder of the Girl Scouts of America was born here. A beautifully preserved 1821 Regency mansion.
- First African Baptist Church (23 Montgomery St.) — One of the oldest African American churches in the US, founded 1773. An important civil rights landmark.
- Davenport House Museum (324 E. State St.) — One of Savannah's finest Federal-style mansions, beautifully restored.

- SCAD Museum of Art (601 Turner Blvd.) — World-class contemporary art in a stunning converted 19th-century railroad building.
- Georgia State Railroad Museum (655 Louisville Rd.) — The largest intact antebellum railroad repair facility in the world.
- American Prohibition Museum (209 W. St. Julian St.) — The only museum in the US dedicated to the Prohibition era, with an authentic speakeasy on-site.

## **River Street & the Waterfront**

River Street runs along the foot of the bluff below Bay Street, connected by steep cobblestone ramps and the famous “Stone Stairs of Death” (33 very steep and narrow steps — an adrenaline rush). The cobblestones on River Street are made from ship ballast stones brought over from Europe. Watch the enormous cargo ships pass right through the heart of the city — the Savannah port is one of the busiest on the East Coast, and the ships are jaw-droppingly large.

## **Bonaventure Cemetery**

One of the most beautiful cemeteries in the world — this is not an exaggeration. Established in 1846, Bonaventure is a stunning landscape of live oaks, Spanish moss, and elaborate Victorian monuments overlooking the Wilmington River. Made famous by John Berendt’s *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Located about 3 miles east of the Historic District — worth the trip. Best in the early morning light.

## CHAPTER 10

# Haunted Savannah & Ghost Tours

*“Savannah is not just one of the most haunted cities in America. It is where Destination Ghost Tours was born.” — Destination Ghost Tours*

There is no city in America quite like Savannah when it comes to paranormal history. The combination of yellow fever epidemics, Civil War battles, colonial conflicts, and centuries of tragedy has left a palpable energy that visitors describe over and over. The city sits on top of layers of forgotten burials — beneath squares, beneath streets, beneath your hotel. When Savannah says it’s haunted, it means it.

## The Most Haunted Locations in Savannah

Location	The Story
Colonial Park Cemetery	Savannah’s oldest public cemetery (est. 1750). Thousands buried here from the yellow fever epidemics. Union soldiers vandalized headstones during the Civil War. Widely regarded as the most haunted spot in the city.
The Sorrel-Weed House	One of the most paranormally active locations in the US. Featured on numerous TV ghost hunting programs. A dark history of death and sorrow within its walls.
The Marshall House Hotel	Used as a Union Army hospital during the Civil War and as a yellow fever hospital. Amputated limbs were reportedly discovered during renovations. Guests report encounters frequently.
17Hundred90 Inn	Savannah’s oldest inn. The resident ghost, Anna, a young woman who allegedly fell (or was pushed) from an upstairs window in the 1800s, is reported regularly by guests.
Hamilton-Turner Inn	The ghost of a young boy and other spirits have been reported throughout this 1873 mansion on Lafayette Square.
Bonaventure Cemetery	Restless spirits, ghostly apparitions, and unexplained phenomena reported throughout one of America’s most beautiful cemeteries.
Moon River Brewing Co.	The most actively haunted bar in Savannah. Staff and customers report encounters in the basement and upper floors of this 1821 building.
The Owens-Thomas House	Stunning Regency architecture with a deeply troubled history tied to slavery and antebellum society. Paranormal activity widely reported.
Madison Square	Site of the brutal Siege of Savannah in October 1779. Hundreds died on this ground in a failed French and American attempt to retake the city from the British.

## Book Your Ghost Tour

Destination Ghost Tours — formerly Haunted Savannah Tours — was born on these streets and built its reputation night after night, walking Savannah’s shadowed squares. Our guides are expert storytellers who combine documented history, local legend, and the authentic atmosphere of this extraordinary city into an experience you will not forget. Tours run year-round, rain or shine, in Savannah and beyond.

Tour Type	Duration	Details
Haunted Walking Tours	1.5–2 hours	Our signature experience. Walk Savannah’s most haunted streets with an expert guide. Real history, chilling legends, unforgettable stories.
Self-Guided Tours	At your pace	Unlock Savannah’s haunted history on your own schedule with our self-guided tour content.
Private Tarot Readings	Varies	Personal paranormal and intuitive experiences for those seeking a deeper connection.

■ **BOOK YOUR HAUNTED ADVENTURE** [destinationghost.com](http://destinationghost.com) • Use code **GiveMe10** for 10% off!

## CHAPTER 11

## Day Trips from Savannah

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### **Tybee Island — 18 miles east (~30 min)**

Savannah's beloved beach. A classic, low-key Georgia barrier island with a lighthouse (the Tybee Island Lighthouse is the oldest and tallest in Georgia), great seafood shacks, calm swimming beaches, and a funky beach-town vibe. Perfect for a full day. Parking can be tight in summer — arrive early.

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### **Hilton Head Island, SC — 40 miles north (~45 min)**

A polished South Carolina resort island known for its golf, pristine beaches, bike trails, and upscale dining. A more refined beach experience than Tybee. Worth a day trip for tennis, cycling, or a resort lunch.

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### **Beaufort, SC — 45 miles north (~1 hour)**

One of the most beautiful small towns in the South. Antebellum mansions, the stunning Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, and a charming downtown. Films like *Forrest Gump*, *The Big Chill*, and *The Great Santini* were filmed here.

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### **Charleston, SC — 108 miles north (~2 hours)**

Savannah's grand rival in beauty and history. Rainbow Row, the Battery, Fort Sumter, and world-class dining. If you have a spare day, Charleston is absolutely worth the drive. Amtrak also connects the two cities.

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### **Wormsloe Historic Site — 10 miles southeast (~20 min)**

One of the most photogenic spots in Georgia — a 1.5-mile avenue of ancient tabby ruins and live oaks draped in Spanish moss. Georgia's oldest standing building. Magical in morning light.

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### **Cumberland Island National Seashore — 70 miles south (~1.5 hr + ferry)**

A wild, undeveloped barrier island accessible only by ferry. Wild horses roam freely, ruins of Carnegie mansions rise from the forest, and the beaches are pristine and uncrowded. One of the most extraordinary natural experiences on the East Coast.

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## CHAPTER 12

# When to Visit — Seasons & Events

Savannah is genuinely beautiful in every season, but each has a distinct character. Here's an honest breakdown:

## ■ Fall (October–November) — Our Top Pick

The best time to visit, full stop. Crowds thin out after the summer rush, the heat and humidity finally break, and the atmosphere is ideal for ghost tours and long walks through the squares. October is spooky season in America's most haunted city — it doesn't get better than this. The only caveat: hurricane season technically runs through the end of November, though major storms are rare.

## ❄️ Winter (December–February) — Romantic & Magical

Savannah in winter is genuinely underrated. Christmas lights transform the squares and historic district into something out of a Hallmark movie. The weather is pleasant (60s–70s°F days, 40s–50s at night), crowds are manageable, and hotel rates drop significantly. A wonderful time for walking tours, cozy restaurant dinners, and exploring without fighting the summer masses.

## ■ Spring (March–May) — Blooming & Busy

Spring brings the azaleas into full, glorious bloom and everything feels vibrantly alive. It's also the city's busiest tourist season. March is particularly intense: Savannah's St. Patrick's Day celebration is one of the largest in the United States and draws massive crowds (the entire city turns green for a week). Pollen in March and April can be relentless. Book accommodations well in advance for spring visits.

## ■ Summer (June–August) — Hot, Humid & Fun

Savannah's summers are legitimately hot and very humid — temperatures regularly reach the upper 90s°F and the air feels thick. But summer is Tybee Island season, museum weather, and the city has an energy all its own. Pack bug spray, quality sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, and drink more water than you think you need.

## Major Annual Events

Event	When	Notes
St. Patrick's Day Festival	Mid-March	One of the largest in the US. The city is packed. Book months ahead.
Savannah Music Festival	Late March–April	World-class multi-genre festival. Book early.
SCAD Savannah Film Festival	Late October	One of the largest university film festivals in the US.

Savannah Food & Wine Festival	November	Highly regarded culinary event throughout the Historic District.
Rock'n'Roll Savannah Marathon	November	Popular race through the Historic District.
Savannah HarborFest	Summer	Free waterfront concerts and events.
Savannah Stopover Music Festival	Early March	Indie music festival before SXSW.

## CHAPTER 13

# Essential Tips Before You Go

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## ■ Wear the Right Shoes

This cannot be overstated. Savannah's cobblestone streets and brick sidewalks are beautiful but brutal on your feet. Comfortable walking shoes or sneakers are essential. Chunky heels are tolerable; stilettos are a disaster. You will walk 5–10 miles per day without trying.

## ■ Always Carry Your ID

Nearly every bar and restaurant that serves alcohol in Savannah is required by law to card every customer regardless of apparent age. No ID means no drink — even at 65.

## ■ Do Not Touch the Spanish Moss

The Spanish moss is one of Savannah's most iconic features and it is absolutely gorgeous — but it is home to chiggers (also called Spanish Moss lice). These tiny insects cause intensely itchy red welts that can last for days. Admire from a distance only.

## ■ Download the ParkSavannah App

If you're driving, download the ParkSavannah app ([parksav.net](http://parksav.net)) before you arrive. You can pay for any metered space and extend your time remotely from anywhere. A genuine quality-of-life improvement.

## ■ Book in Advance

Savannah's most popular restaurants, ghost tours, and hotels fill up well in advance — especially on weekends, during spring, and around major events. Book as far ahead as possible for The Grey, Olde Pink House, the Bananas, and ghost tours.

## ■ Walk Bull Street

If you walk only one street in Savannah, make it Bull Street from the river all the way to the south end of Forsyth Park. You'll pass through Johnson, Wright, Chippewa, Madison, and Monterey Squares — a masterclass in urban beauty.

## ■ Talk to the Locals

Savannah people are genuinely welcoming and love to share their city with visitors. Ask your waiter, bartender, or hotel concierge for their personal recommendations. The best tips rarely appear in guidebooks.

### ■ Watch These Films First

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil (1997, directed by Clint Eastwood) and Forrest Gump (1994) were both filmed extensively in Savannah. Watch them before your trip and play 'spot the location' while you're here.

### ■ Read This Book

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt (1994) is essentially required reading before visiting Savannah. A true-crime narrative set in the city, it was on the New York Times bestseller list for four years. Savannah's relationship with this book is a whole experience unto itself.

### ■ Embrace Rain

Savannah gets rain year-round. Summer afternoons often bring brief but intense thunderstorms. Pack a small umbrella or light rain jacket and don't let a shower ruin your plans — ghost tours run rain or shine, and cobblestone streets look extraordinary in the rain.

### ■ Bug Spray in Summer

Mosquitoes and other insects are a genuine force of nature in a coastal Georgia summer. DEET-based repellent is strongly recommended for any outdoor activity in summer evenings.

### ■ One-Way Streets

Most streets in the Historic District are one-way. The grid is logical once you learn it, but navigating by car before you know the layout can be confusing. Use Google Maps and pay attention to the direction arrows.

CHAPTER 14

# Emergency Contacts & Practical Info

## Medical Facilities

Facility	Type	Distance from Downtown	Address	Phone
Memorial Health Univ. Medical Center	ER, 24/7	~6 miles, 13 min drive	4700 Waters Ave	(912) 350-8000
St. Joseph’s Hospital	ER, 24hrs	~13 miles, 21 min drive	11705 Mercy Blvd	(912) 819-4100
Candler Hospital	ER, 24hrs	~4 miles, 10 min drive	5353 Reynolds St	(912) 819-6000
AppleCare Urgent Care — Bull Street	Urgent Care	~1.7 miles, 9 min drive	Bull Street	—
Savannah Veterinary Emergency Clinic	Vet ER, 24hrs	~8 miles, 16 min drive	335 Stephenson Ave	(912) 355-6113

## Key Phone Numbers

Service	Phone Number
Emergency (Police/Fire/Medical)	911
Savannah Police Non-Emergency	(912) 651-6675
Savannah-Chatham Police (towing)	(912) 651-6476
Parking Services (boots/towing)	(912) 651-6470 • After 5pm: (912) 651-6477
Savannah Visitor Center	(912) 944-0455
Savannah Airport (SAV)	(912) 964-0514
CAT Bus Transit	(912) 233-5767
Non-emergency poison control	1-800-222-1222

## Useful Websites & Apps

Resource	What It’s For	URL/App
Visit Savannah	Official tourism website	visitsavannah.com

ParkSavannah	Pay for parking by phone	parksav.net
The Downtowner	Free on-demand downtown rides	ridedowntowner.com/savannah
CAT Transit	Bus routes & schedules	catchacat.org
connectonthedot.com	DOT Shuttle routes	connectonthedot.com
Savannah.gov	City alerts, road closures, events	savannahga.gov
Resy / OpenTable	Restaurant reservations	resy.com • opentable.com
Destination Ghost Tours	Book your ghost tour + 10% off	destinationghost.com

### Historic District Boundaries (Quick Reference)

■■ The Four Corners of the Historic District

NORTH: River Street / The Savannah River SOUTH: Gwinnett Street (through the middle of Forsyth Park) WEST: Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard EAST: East Broad Street

*You are going to love this city. Walk slowly. Eat well. Talk to everyone. Turn down streets you don't recognize. And when the sun goes down — join us. ■ destinationghost.com • Use code GiveMe10 for 10% off your ghost tour*