

South Carolina

By Tom Kirvan

A STATE FILLED WITH SOUTHERN CHARM, COASTAL BEAUTY, AND RICH HISTORY

South Carolina is a state where moss-draped oaks line cobblestone streets, barrier islands stretch into the Atlantic, and the past lingers in every plantation, battlefield, and historic home.

With a population of about 5.4 million people, South Carolina offers a rich blend of coastal beauty, Appalachian highlands, and deeply rooted Southern culture. Whether you're a beachcomber, a history enthusiast, or a foodie craving shrimp and grits, the Palmetto State invites you to slow down and soak it all in.

South Carolina is bordered by North Carolina to the north, Georgia to the south and west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The state is geographically divided into three distinct regions: the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Lowcountry along the coast is characterized by tidal marshes and barrier islands, while the Upstate offers rolling hills and forested mountains.

The state capital is Columbia, located near the geographic center of South Carolina. Home to the University of South Carolina, Columbia is a vibrant city with a growing arts scene, historic districts, and scenic spots along the Congaree River. It also serves as the political and cultural hub of the state, blending Southern hospitality with youthful energy.

Tucked in the northwestern corner of the state, Sassafras Mountain is South Carolina's highest point at 3,560 feet above sea level. Located along the border with North Carolina in the Blue Ridge Mountains, it offers panoramic views of four states from its summit observation tower. The drive to the top is as scenic as the view, winding through thick forests and Appalachian foothills.

South Carolina holds a unique place in American history. It was one of the original 13 colonies, and Charleston was a major port city during the colonial era. The state played a central role in both the American Revolution and the Civil War. South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union in 1860, setting the stage for the conflict that followed.

The legacy of slavery and plantation culture remains palpable, with many preserved estates like Boone Hall Plantation offering insights into the lives of both the enslaved and the wealthy elites of the era. South Carolina also contributed significantly to the Civil Rights Movement, including the 1951 case of *Briggs v. Elliott*, one of the five cases combined into the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

The state's cuisine is a point of pride, from Lowcountry boils and she-crab soup to barbecue that varies by region – mustard-based



Fast Facts

Capital: Columbia

Population: 5.4 million

Highest Point: Sassafras Mountain (3,560 feet)

Economic engines: Auto manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism

Primerus Member: Collins & Lacy, P.C.

Collins & Lacy, P.C., a full-service defense firm located in Columbia.

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in the Midlands, vinegar-based in the Pee Dee, and more. Music, too, runs deep and wide, with gospel, jazz, and bluegrass echoing across porches and church halls.

Five Must-See Destinations

- **Charleston:** Often considered one of the most charming cities in the U.S., Charleston is a living postcard of Southern elegance. Cobblestone streets, antebellum homes, and pastel-colored facades define the city's Historic District. Visit Rainbow Row, stroll along The Battery, or take a carriage ride through the city's storied past. Don't miss Fort Sumter, where the first shots of the Civil War were fired in 1861.
- **Myrtle Beach:** For sun and surf, Myrtle Beach is the place to be. With more than 60 miles of sandy shoreline, an iconic boardwalk, and plenty of family-friendly attractions like amusement parks and aquariums, it's a classic American beach town. Golfers will also find paradise here, with more than 90 championship courses in the surrounding area.
- **Hilton Head Island:** A quieter, more refined coastal escape, Hilton Head Island is known for its pristine beaches, luxury resorts, eco-friendly development, and its world-class golf and tennis facilities. Visitors can kayak through tidal marshes, bike along miles of trails, or relax under the sea breezes at Coligny Beach Park.
- **Congaree National Park:** Just outside Columbia lies one of the nation's lesser-known but most unique national parks: Congaree National Park. Home to the largest tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the U.S., this park is a biodiversity hotspot. Wander along the Boardwalk Loop Trail or paddle through the Congaree River floodplain for a serene, immersive nature experience.
- **Greenville and Falls Park on the Reedy:** In the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Greenville has emerged as a dynamic destination with a blend of small-town charm and modern vibrancy. Its crown jewel is Falls Park on the Reedy, a stunning downtown green space with waterfalls, suspension bridges, and outdoor art installations. The revitalized Main Street is packed with restaurants, boutiques, and galleries.

