Welcome To
Hilton Head Island

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Hilton Head Island is a barrier island off the coast of South Carolina, located about 30 highway miles north of Savannah, GA. At seven miles in width and fourteen in length, it is the second largest Atlantic coast barrier island after Long Island, NY.

It is shaped roughly like a tennis sneaker, with the "toe" known as the south end, the "ball" of the foot is Forest Beach, and the "top" is the north end.

The island is separated from the mainland by the Calibogue sound and the Intracoastal Waterway. Between Hilton Head and the mainland are two islands. The two of which are, Daufuskie Island and Pinkney Island. Daufuskie Island is accessible only by water and is partly wild and partly developed for tourism. Pinckney Island is accessible from the bridge linking Hilton Head to the mainland, and it is a National Wildlife Refuge popular among bird watchers.
On Hilton Head are several "plantations", which are private, gated communities with restricted access. All beaches on Hilton Head are public, though access from the interior may be restricted. There are many miles of beach, making it easy to get away from crowded "hot spots". Dunes separate the beach from the interior, a buffer against storms. The ecological balance of the dunes is very delicate, so crossing them is permitted only at boardwalk-like walkovers. The width of the beach is affected by tides, which commonly run eight feet. Keep this in mind when you leave a towel or shoes at low tide - eight feet of tide translates to many yards of beach. The beach slopes very gradually into the ocean, which limits waves to less than surfing size. There are some areas of beach that can have treacherous currents during tidal changes. No motor vehicles are permitted on the beaches.

A four lane highway, US 278, (William Hilton Parkway) runs the length of Hilton Head, from the bridge to the south end. The cross island expressway is a toll road that provides a shortcut from the north end to the south end. The $1.25 toll is well worth the 12 traffic lights and four miles it cuts out (you'll save that in gasoline). US 278 ends at Sea Pines circle, the same place you will end up if you use the expressway. From the circle Pope Avenue takes you to the beach at Coligny circle, and South Forest Beach Drive runs along the ocean from there.

There is no "downtown" on Hilton Head. Shopping and activities are spread throughout, although more heavily concentrated on the south end of the island. Though there aren't any malls, Hilton Head has plenty of shopping.

Weather in Hilton Head is semi-tropical. In winter temperatures rarely drop below freezing. In the summer it can get quite hot, with July and August highs occasionally reaching 100 degrees. On hot summer days, tropical afternoon thundershowers are common, though not long lasting. They are usually accompanied by potentially dangerous lightning. If you are caught outside get off the beach and stay away from tall trees. Visitors are sometimes surprised by the intensity of the sun and have their vacation spoiled by sunburn. Please be cautious - it's no fun spending part of your vacation in your room in discomfort.
Hilton Head Island is almost bisected by Broad Creek, which is navigable for most of its length and is home to several marinas.

Activities

_Hilton Head Island: There Really is Something for Everyone_

If you’re ready to take a break from such timeless Hilton Head activities as building sandcastles and frolicking in the waves off one of the top 10 family beaches in the United States, you’ll discover there are countless other things to see and do in Hilton Head.

From biking and hiking to fishing and kayaking, or shopping and guided tours to historical and cultural pursuits: A new adventure awaits you around every corner. And with over 350 tennis courts and 24 championship golf courses, there are always lots of fun and games waiting here for you, too. There are 50+ miles of bike trails. **Hilton Head is a Gold Level Bike Friendly community.** Life’s a beautiful day at the beach—and a whole lot more—on Hilton Head Island.
A Guide To Hilton Head Beaches

Hilton Heads 14 miles of beach is mostly along the Atlantic Ocean coast, some is along the **Calibogue Sound**, some on the **Port Royal Sound** at **Port Royal Plantation** and **Hilton Head Plantation** has a small beach next to **Dolphin Head**, also on Port Royal sound. The newly opened **Fish Haul Creek Park** offers a little known beach access to a beach on the Port Royal Sound. The beach there is quite private (no, not *that* private) but with little wave action.

Along the beach you will see numbered markers which have been put in place to help identify the location to emergency responders. The numbers start at "one" on the **Calibogue Beach** at **Lands End in Sea Pines** plantation and increment by one every tenth of a mile as you go North or East. Numbers ending in "A" "B" or "C" designate a location between the two numbers on either side and are not indicative of miles..

The beaches slope very gradually in most areas. You can go out a long way from shore and still be able to stand with your head above water (there are some places where tidal currents produce deep holes, so be careful). This gradual slope inhibits wave action, so Hilton Head is not a place to surfboard unless you are just learning. It also means the tides have a very significant effect on the width of the beach. When the tide is high, there is still a good beach from approximately beach marker 80A to Tower Beach in Sea Pines, at beach marker 13 and even as far as marker 8, and also from marker 102 to 111A. Depending on how high the tide is and when the last beach renourishment took place, other locations may prove unusable at high tide.

The sand below the mid tide line is usually hard packed enough to support a bicycle with wide tires, and biking on the beach at or near low tide is a popular pastime (you should be warned that hitting a patch of soft sand will bring you to a very sudden stop). Beach bikers have learned to check the wind direction before heading out - riding into the wind is like riding uphill, and vice versa.
There are seven "public access"¹ beach areas popular with visitors (most are attended by life guards from Memorial weekend to Labor Day). Pay parking is available at all but the Islander's Beach Park, and there are reserved parking spots for those who purchase annual beach tags (available to Hilton Head property owners only).

**Alder Lane**

The southern most of these beach access locations is beside the Marriott Grand Ocean Resort on South Forest Beach Rd. at Alder Lane. There is parking across South Forest Beach Rd at the meters for 25¢ for 15 minutes. This is a nice wide beach and is relatively uncrowded. Amenities include restrooms and a drink vending machine. It's an easy bike ride from most south end locations. This beach also is equipped with the mats that make it **wheelchair accessible**.

**Burke's Beach**

Burke's Beach is located off William Hilton parkway (278 Bus.) at Burke's Beach Rd. The parking is very limited, though you can park next door at Chaplin Park. There are no amenities. A reader recently reported there is now a lifeguard there. There is no beach matting for wheelchair access. This beach is very uncrowded.

**Coligny Beach**

This beach is located at **Coligny Circle** at Pope Avenue and South Forest Beach Drive. It's the island's busiest beach, in part because volleyball nets are available and an outdoor bar is located just off the beach at the Holiday Inn. There are rest rooms, changing rooms, water fountains, sand showers, pay telephones and other amenities. Mats designed to make the beach **wheelchair accessible** are at this location. Life Guards rent beach equipment, Hobie Cats, recumbent bikes, sand trikes, umbrellas, etc.
Parking is available at the town parking lot at the corner of South Forest Beach Drive and Pope Avenue. The entrance is on Pope across from the Exxon. It costs $4.00 for the day ($2.00 after 2:00 PM), with in and out privileges (keep your receipt). There is also parking closer to the beach, on Coligny Circle on the North side, but it fills up quickly. Coligny Plaza, adjacent, offers many shops and eateries. Please don't park in the Plaza to go to the beach - the merchants don't appreciate it and your vehicle could be towed.

Though this beach can become crowded in season, you have only to walk a few hundred yards North or South to get away from the crowds.

**Dreissen Beach Park**

*(Singleton Beach)*

**Dreissen Beach** is also off William Hilton Parkway, at Bradley Beach Rd. It has Life Guards, plenty of parking, rest rooms, sand showers and vending machines. It has a playground and a few picnic tables, one with a grill nearby. The boardwalk to the beach is quite long and requires healthy legs. If you park here, note the number of your parking space and go to the machine at the building housing the restrooms to pay. It takes quarters. This beach is equipped with the mats that make it **wheelchair accessible**.

**Folly Field Beach**

Folly Field beach is located on Starfish Road, a right turn off Folly Field Road. Parking is somewhat limited (52 spaces at meters at 25¢ per 15 minute period), but restrooms, sand showers, Life Guards and water fountains are available. While dangerous conditions such as riptides and undertows can exist on any beach, the Folly is an area where swimmers have (rarely) gotten in trouble. This beach also is equipped with the mats that make it **wheelchair accessible**. It is the favorite beach for surfers.

**Fish Haul Creek Park**
Mitchelville Beach Park

The beach is accessed from the park and is a considerable walk from it. The beach is on Port Royal Sound with not much wave action, but it is a little used beach, often deserted, and very wide at low tide. If privacy is your bag, you might want to check it out.

Islander's Beach Club

As the name implies, this beach is intended primarily for locals. Parking is available only for those who purchase annual permits, which are limited to Hilton Head property owners. There is nothing other than that to keep visitors from enjoying this beach park - you can always have someone drop you off or go by bike. Amenities here include restrooms, changing rooms, playground, soft drink machine, sand showers and a few picnic tables. It's located off Folly Field Road at Sparkleberry Lane (actual address is 94 Folly Field Rd.). This beach also is equipped with the mats that make it wheelchair accessible.

To see a great map showing town parks and the beach parks, click here. You need Adobe reader and a bit of patience, but it's worth it. You can click on the magnifying glass on the Adobe toolbar to get details.

Other Beaches, South to North

South Beach In Sea Pines Plantation, at the "toe" of the island near the South Beach marina, is the Calibogue beach. There is no public parking, so walking or biking are indicated. There are two characteristics of this beach area that are of interest: at high tide there is little or no beach; and tidal currents will move you up or down the beach depending on flow. There are no amenities here. Otherwise, this is a pleasant and uncrowded area where dolphins and other wildlife abound.
**Tower Beach**

Tower Beach is located in Sea Pines plantation on the Atlantic ocean. This beach is intended for use by property owners, and parking is restricted to property owners, though it is otherwise accessible to anyone by bicycle or on foot. It provides restrooms, water fountains, and a picnic area with barbecue grills.

**Sea Pines Beach Club**

This beach is also in Sea Pines Plantation on the Atlantic ocean. It offers many amenities such as restrooms, food service, a bar, picnic tables, showers, entertainment and activities for children (seasonal). It is attended by lifeguards and has some parking, which fills up quickly in season. The Sea Pines trolley provides transportation to the Beach Club from the Greenwood Drive parking lot, Harbour Town and other locations. Parking at this beach is available to anyone staying in Sea Pines.

**The Sonesta Resort**

This beach is in Shipyard plantation and is accessible to those staying in Shipyard. Parking is available at the very end of Shipyard Drive, though it fills up in the busy season. Visitors to the Sonesta Resort can also enjoy this beach, but consider access through the hotel to be for hotel guests only.

**Palmetto Dunes Beach**

In the vicinity of the Marriott Beach, Golf Resort and the Omni Resort these beaches are accessible to guests staying in Palmetto Dunes plantation and can also be enjoyed by visitors to the hotel. There is a pleasant ocean front bar at the hotel from where the beach can be admired.

**Westin Resort Hotel**

This beach is accessible primarily through the hotel, which is limited to hotel guests. It is only a few hundred feet from the Islander Beach Club (see above).
Beach Regulations

The beach regulations are posted all along the beach. For the most part they are logical rules designed to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for those using the beach. For example, there are restrictions regarding playing Frisbee, flying stunt kites and fishing in "designated swimming areas" (those listed above) because these are activities that could cause injury to those on a crowded beach. The regulations are enforced by the lifeguards and sheriff’s deputies.

Four regulations you might not expect are:

No alcoholic beverages are permitted on any part of the beach.

You may not beach a power craft (including wave runners) on any beach, and they must be operated more than 150 Yards offshore, for the protection of swimmers.

You may not walk on the sand dunes, as they are very fragile and are our protection against storm surge from gales and hurricanes.

You may not remove any living creature from the beach (hermit crabs, starfish, sand dollars, etc.). What you think is a shell could be a hermit crab’s home.

And, there is something we locals would ask of you: Take nothing but your memories, leave nothing but your footprints.
Dogs love the beach, but not everyone loves dogs (some people fear them). Consequently there are rules regarding dogs on the beach. The rules vary depending on the time of year. Few vacationers bring dogs because it's difficult to find housing that will accept pets, but if you bring your dog, make sure you are aware of the restrictions. Above all, pick up after your pet. Be aware joggers are common on the beach and dogs like to chase them.

For a complete set of rules and regs, click [here](#).

**Beach Amenities**

The lifeguards on Hilton Head get paid based on commissions on rentals of beach chairs, umbrellas, recumbent beach bicycles, hobie cats, and water tricycles. You can rent any of these and more right on the beach. The company involved is called Shore Beach Services and their phone number is 843-785-3494. You might want to try some of the companies that rent bikes, cribs, etc. for chair and umbrella prices. Several companies rent beach equipment at very competitive prices - [click here](#).

**A bike ride down the Atlantic beach**

If you bike from the Westin or Islander Beach Park to Land’s End in Sea Pines, you will have traveled about 11 miles one way. You can do this on a beach bike in an hour and a half with the wind at your back if you don’t stop. But, it will be much more enjoyable if you make some stops and learn about the island from the beach, even if you don’t make the whole trip. Let’s take a hypothetical bike excursion. With the wind at our backs, and a couple of hours before low tide, we start at:

The Islander Beach Club, at beach marker **110** (11 miles from marker 1) and head south.

At marker **105** (you have now traveled all of a half mile) is Folly Field Beach Park, described above. Not much to do here unless you need to use the restrooms. While dangerous conditions such as riptides and undertows can exist on any beach, the Folly is an area where swimmers have gotten in trouble.
Marker 102 is where the Dreissen Beach Park is located (description above). If you have children with you, they can enjoy the playground or you can break out the sandwiches and sit at a picnic table.

At marker 98 is Burke’s Beach. Not much to do here except watch people crabbing in the estuarine creeks.

You may need to be cautious here the rather than crossing in the water other than at low tide due to rip currents at the beach.

At marker 94A you might want to stop in at Coco’s On the Beach for a cold one.

Marker 82 is the Marriott Beach and Golf Resort in Palmetto Dunes Plantation. Here is the Point Comfort poolside and beachside bar, and Quinn’s II, a restaurant offering a limited menu of good food at either outdoor tables or inside in the air conditioning, also with an ocean view.

Disney Resort, the time share at Shelter Cove, has a beachfront facility at marker 80A just past marker 81.

The next hotel you will see is the Sonesta Resort in Shipyard Plantation at marker 71A, just past marker 72. This hotel has a poolside bar, but it’s located a fairly long walk from the beach through a pavilion used for group affairs. The bar hours are a mystery to me, but the grounds are quite attractive.

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Now we have a stretch of about a mile before we hit the busiest part of the beach, starting at mile 61, where the Sea Crest has an ocean front bar and food service between their two swimming pools.

Immediately past the Sea Crest at marker 59A is Coligny Beach, the island’s most popular, described above. Right next to it is the Holiday Inn’s Tiki Hut, a popular beach bar that offers entertainment afternoons and evenings in season. The public is always welcome at the Tiki Hut.
Less than a mile further you will see the Marriott Grand Ocean Resort, a high rise time share. Immediately next to it is the Alder Lane public beach, at marker 52A. You can get a soft drink from a vending machine there or use the restrooms, because the next segment is a mile and a half away.

At marker 38 is the popular Sea Pines Beach Club, described above. Here you can stop for a drink, a burger, and to listen to some entertainment.

Amenities in Sea Pines Plantation are private except for the Beach Club.

The next mile and a half is our favorite stretch of beach. It's very wide and lined with impressive mansions. Wildlife is ever present - Ospreys diving for their catch, Dolphins rising to breathe or slapping the water with their tails to stun fish, and entertaining Pelicans doing their ungainly crash dives. At marker 13 is Tower Beach. Not much reason to stop here unless you need to use the restrooms.

The next mile or so takes you around the "toe" of Hilton Head, a turn toward the West. The beach here is Calibogue Sound beach, and it also teems with wildlife. If the timing is right, you might see a great sunset here. The beach ends at a breakwater that slows the migration of sand into the mouth of Braddock Cove, the entrance to the South Beach marina. In the distance you can see the Harbour Town lighthouse, and on your right is Land's End, a South Beach community.

That's the end of our hypothetical trip. Since Sea Pines plantation is private, and, since going from the beach inland is technically trespassing, we might want to double back to where we can legally get back to the street. To do this you need to go back beyond the Sea Pines Beach Club, perhaps to Alder Lane at marker 53. I certainly would not advocate trespassing and bringing the bikes in at marker 4, where the catamarans and other boats are beached if you are not staying in the plantation. By now the tide is coming in and we can ride back along the leisure trails, where the wind is much less noticeable.
All beaches on Hilton Head are public. "Public access" means you can get to the beach without entering private property. If you are staying in a plantation, you are welcome to access the beach from their property. If you are not staying in a plantation, you can still use the beach adjacent to the plantation as long as you get to it by walking or biking along the beach. Yes, it's a silly distinction.

Heron Point is the new name of the Sea Pines Ocean Course following extensive remodeling. It was designed by Pete Dye and it opened September 15, 2007.

Hilton Head Island Golf

Golf is a favorite sport on Hilton Head, which offers 15 public access courses on the island and nine more nearby. This is an overview of the courses which includes some specifications and price ranges. Prices for golf are seasonal, and change at different times for the various courses. Prices are also subject to "specials" offered by the courses, often reflecting discounts for afternoon play or to play multiple courses. The rules for making tee times vary among the courses as well.

We suggest you discuss your golf requirements with the provider of your accommodations, and request a tee time be made for your first day, at least. This will give you an opportunity to check out availability at other courses without missing a day of golf.

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<p>| Shipyard Golf Club - Galleon/Brigantine | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| Cotter Hall Golf Club | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| The Golf Club at Hilton Head Lakes | Bluffton | $20 |
| Golden Bear Golf Course at Indigo Run | Hilton Head Island | $32 |
| Shipyard Golf Club - Brigantine/Clipper | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| Old South Golf Links | Bluffton | $16 |
| Shipyard Golf Club - Clipper/Galleon | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| Rose Hill Golf Club | Bluffton | $19 |
| Sanctuary Golf Club | Beaufort | $19 |
| Island West Golf Club | Bluffton | $24 |
| Port Royal Golf Club - Robber's Row Course | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| Sea Pines Resort - Heron Point | Hilton Head Island | $119 |
| Bear Creek Golf Club | Hilton Head Island | $24 |
| Hilton Head National Golf Club | Bluffton | $24 |
| Port Royal Golf Club - Planter's Row | Hilton Head Island | $45 |
| Port Royal Golf Club - Bereny Course | Hilton Head Island | $72 |
| Parris Island Golf Course | Parris Island | $10 |
| Crescent Pointe Golf Club | Bluffton | $29 |
| Palmetto Hall - Robert Cupp Course | Hilton Head Island | $82 |
| Sea Pines Resort - Harbour Town Golf Links | Hilton Head Island | $225 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Golf Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bear Creek Golf Club</td>
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