

Charleston: An Insider's View

With its unique antebellum architecture and painstakingly preserved Colonial-era urban core, Charleston is perhaps the most graceful of America's historic cities. Peeking through the city's countless wrought-iron gates, views of jasmine-covered walls, ornate architectural detailing, and elegant gardens add to the city's Colonial charm. Charleston's many-layered, multicultural population, preserved homes, and historical monuments also speak eloquently, and sometimes painfully, of our nation's history. See Charleston through the eyes of John Meffert, a longtime preservation expert whose insights and camaraderie have captivated countless National Trust travelers.

Travel with John Meffert

Historian and longtime favorite National Trust Tours host John Meffert is a longtime proponent of preservation. As former director of the National Trust's Southern Office, he now serves as a consultant on heritage conservation services in his hometown of Charleston, where he has also served as director of the Preservation Society of Charleston, preserving the city's historic resources.



Accommodations at the The Francis Marion Hotel

The Francis Marion Hotel, a historic landmark in the heart of downtown Charleston, South Carolina, has been welcoming guests with traditional Southern hospitality since 1924. Named after General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of the American Revolution, this beautifully restored hotel combines 1920s elegance with modern luxury. Rising twelve stories above the



historic district, the hotel offers spectacular views of Charleston's harbor and church steeples. Enjoy comfortable guestrooms featuring traditional decor and contemporary amenities. The hotel's prime location on Marion Square puts visitors just steps away from the dining and shopping opportunities on King Street as well as many other attractions, including many of the city's finest theaters and the beautiful College of Charleston campus. Enjoy a traditional Southern breakfast in the hotel's Swamp Fox Restaurant that serves classic Southern cuisine made with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. During your stay at the Francis Marion Hotel, enjoy friendly Lowcountry hospitality and Charleston's rich history and timeless charm, all just steps from the energy and excitement of King Street.

Sunday, March 7

Arrivals

Upon arrival in Charleston, transfer independently to the elegant landmark Francis Marion Hotel, a member of Historic Hotels of America and your home for the next four evenings. Late this afternoon, join historian and longtime Charleston resident John Meffert for an opening lecture and overview of the days to follow. Following his talk, join a guided stroll past several hidden architectural gems taking in the historic charm of South Carolina's cultural jewel. Then toast your arrival in Charleston at a welcome dinner. (*D*)

Monday, March 8

Charleston's Historic Homes

Depart for a full day of touring the best historic homes in Charleston. Following a short walk along Charleston's Battery,

enjoy an in-depth tour of the stately Edmondston-Alston House, one of the city's most splendid dwellings and a classic example of Charleston's changing and sophisticated taste in architecture and decorative arts. The house, which was built in the late Federal style and later updated with Greek Revival elements is a repository of family treasures, including Alston family silver, furniture, books, and paintings that remain in place where they have been for more than a century. Next, visit the Heyward-Washington House. This brick Georgian-style double house was built in 1772 and houses a magnificent collection of Charleston-made furniture including the priceless Holmes-Edwards bookcase, dating from 1770 to 1775. Following lunch at a popular local restaurant, enjoy a guided tour of the Gibbes Museum of Art, home to early American

paintings by such renowned American artists as Benjamin West and Thomas Hart Benton, along with a remarkable contemporary American art collection. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure. (*B, L*)

Tuesday, March 9

Drayton Hall & Middleton Place

This morning, drive to Drayton Hall, a National Trust Historic Site and plantation home that survived the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the earthquake of 1886. The main house, in its near-original condition, is considered one of the finest examples of Georgian-Palladian architecture in the United States, and the grounds represent one of the most significant, undisturbed historic landscapes in America. Continue to Middleton Place. After a stroll through the spectacular gardens,

go behind the scenes for a closer look at Middleton family collections during a tour of the historic house. Relax over lunch featuring classic local dishes like fried chicken, country biscuits, okra gumbo, collard greens, and pecan pie. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure. (B, L)

Wednesday, March 10 **Private Gardens in Charleston**

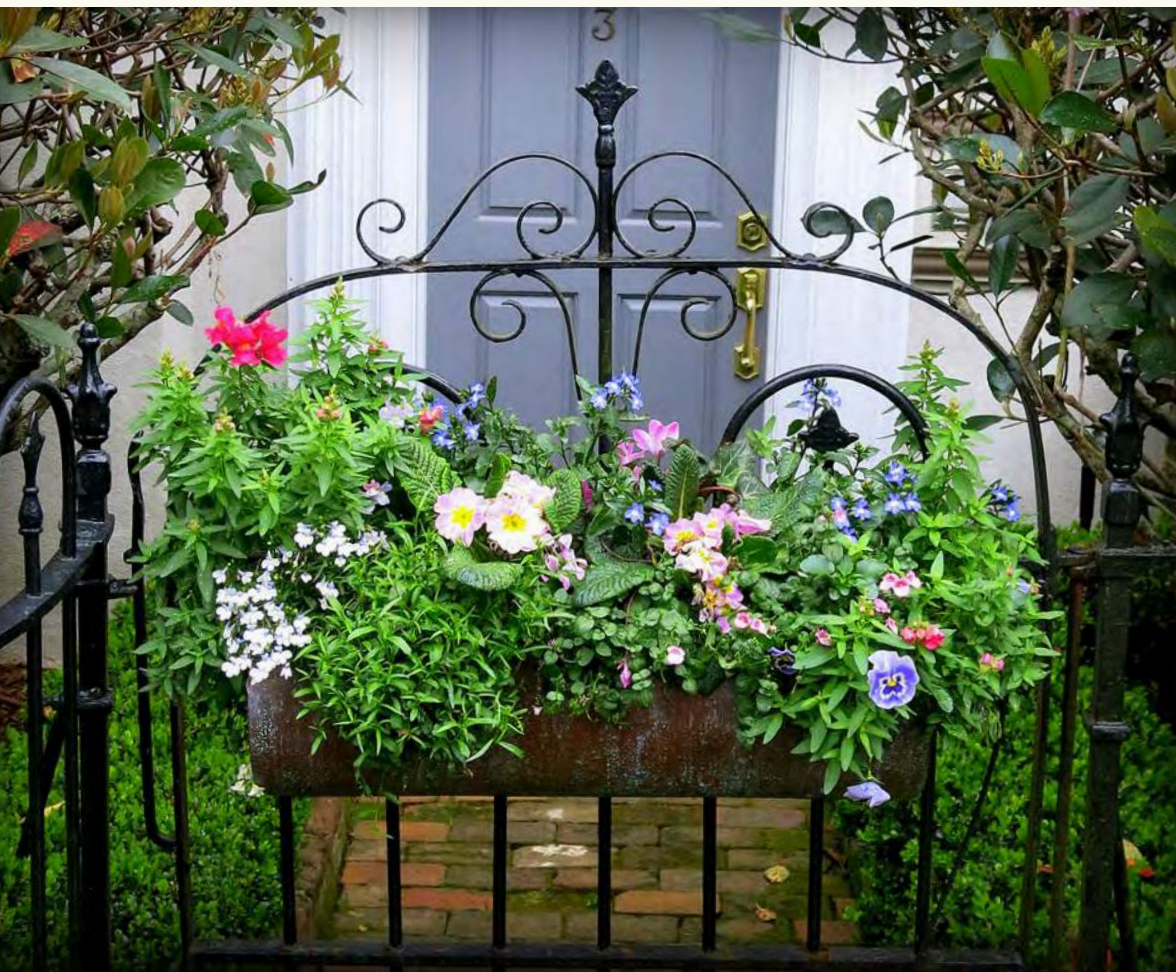
At the Nathaniel Russell House, enjoy a guided tour of the property

and its decorative arts collection. Set amid spacious formal gardens, the Nathaniel Russell House is a National Historic Landmark recognized as one of America's most important neoclassical dwellings. The graceful interior—restored to its 1808 grandeur with elaborate plaster ornamentation and a grand spiral staircase—is among the most exuberant homes ever created in early America. Today, be special guests at two magnificent, historic Charleston gardens opened exclusively for

the National Trust. After free time for lunch and independent exploration of the city, rejoin your fellow travelers this evening to bid farewell to Charleston during a memorable dinner in an exceptional local restaurant. (B, D)

Thursday, March 11 **Departures**

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer independently to the airport for return flights home. (B)





National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Trust Tours

Charleston: An Insider's View

March 7–11, 2027

Tour Cost:

Land Package: \$3,895

Single Supplement in a Deluxe Room: \$795

Single Supplement in a Traditoinal Queen Room: \$595

**Land Package price is per person based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 15 paying participants.*

Activity Level: Moderate, good overall mobility required.

Deposit & Final Payment: A deposit of \$1,000 per registrant is required to reserve space on the tour, of which \$500 is nonrefundable for ISDI's registration and planning fee unless the tour is cancelled due to low enrollment. This deposit may be paid by check or by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Final balance will be invoiced and is due on November 24, 2026 and must be paid by check to International Seminar Design, Inc. Registrations are accepted after this date on a space-available basis with payment in full by check only.

Flights: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for all aspects of their round-trip air arrangements. Please do not purchase airline tickets until operation of the tour is confirmed by ISDI.

Tour Inclusions: 4 nights in deluxe category rooms at the four-star Francis Marion Hotel; breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 2 dinners, 2 glasses of wine at dinners; access to beautiful private gardens; academic leadership of John Meffert; services of an ISDI tour director; land transportation by private coach; gratuities to local guides and drivers, entrance fees to sites per itinerary; taxes and service charges; bottled water on coach.

Tour Exclusions: Airfare, airline taxes, and fuel surcharges; airport and hotel portage; airport transfers; excursions, activities, or meals during traveler's free time; personal items; personal services; travel extensions; personal insurance for health, baggage, and tour cancellation; passport fees; visa fees; gratuities for hotel housekeeping staff.

Terms and Conditions: Upon receipt of registration, ISDI will send registrant a Participant Tour Agreement detailing the full terms and conditions for this tour. This document must be signed and returned to ISDI before participant's registration is considered complete and any arrangements can be confirmed. ISDI will send all documents pertaining to the tour by email unless specifically requested otherwise.

Cancellations & Refunds: Cancellation by participant must be made in writing to ISDI and is effective only upon acknowledged receipt by ISDI. There is a non-refundable registration and planning fee of \$500 per person regardless of cancellation date. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or before November 24, 2026 : full refund minus \$500 per person registration and planning fee. Written cancellation received by ISDI between November 25, 2026 and January 20, 2027: full refund minus \$1,950 per person cancellation fee (includes registration and planning fee). Written cancellation received by ISDI on or after January 21, 2027: no refund. Tour registration is non-transferable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not allowed. After the tour has commenced, no refunds will be issued for any reason including, but not limited to, unused portions of tour. If the tour is cancelled by ISDI or National Trust Tours due to low enrollment, active registrants will receive a full refund of all tour payments.

Travel Insurance: Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan in conjunction with this tour, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, ISDI must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration. For additional information, please contact National Trust Tours at 888-484-8785.

Note: The Edmondston-Alston House visit will be substituted if it is closed to the public.

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TO REGISTER ONLINE:

TO REGISTER BY PHONE:

TO REGISTER BY EMAIL:



National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Trust Tours

UPCOMING TRAVEL PROGRAMS with NATIONAL TRUST TOURS

The Philadelphia Flower Show + Brandywine Valley Estates

March 4–8, 2027

Detroit: Preservation & Perseverance in the Motor City

May 3-7, 2027

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November 7-11, 2027

Private Houses & Gardens of Bermuda

November 30–December 5, 2027

For more information, visit nationaltrusttours.com

Travel with National Trust Tours is open to members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), a privately-funded non-profit organization, works to save America's historic places. Membership is \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families. To learn more about the NTHP, visit www.savingplaces.org.