



48 HOURS IN

Savannah, GA

SLOW DOWN · STAY AWHILE

WELCOME

GoingSolo.Life

Welcome to Savannah.

Savannah is the most beautiful city in the American South. The statement is not as contested as it sounds — twenty-two park squares laid out in 1733, live oaks draped in Spanish moss forming canopies over brick-paved streets, antebellum architecture in a state of preservation that most American cities sacrificed in the name of progress. Savannah kept its streets. It kept its squares. It kept a pace of life that is not laziness but conviction, and the traveler who adjusts to it — who slows down, who stops in the squares, who takes the long way — is rewarded in proportion. The food has gotten remarkably good. The bars have always been open. Two days here are enough to understand why people come for a weekend and stay for a decade.

How to Use This Guide

- Read through once before you arrive — understand the shape of both days.
- Day 1 covers the Historic District squares, the riverfront, and the best dinner in the city.
- Day 2 moves to the Bonaventure Cemetery, the beach, and the Victorian District.
- The squares are the point. Walk through every one you pass, not around them.
- Open container laws in Savannah allow drinks on public streets. This is not an accident.

Essential Quick Facts

Currency	US Dollar. Cards accepted everywhere. Contactless standard.
Transport	Historic District is walkable. Dot (free downtown shuttle) covers the core. Rideshare for outlying areas.
Weather	Humid subtropical. Hot humid summers, mild winters. Sunscreen and water are not optional May–September.
Time Zone	Eastern Time (ET). UTC-5 winter, UTC-4 summer.
Emergency	911 for all emergencies.
Tipping	20% in restaurants. Savannah's service culture is genuine and tips are noticed.
Open Container	Legal in the Historic District. Plastic cups only — no glass on public streets.

DAY ONE

The Squares · River Street · Forsyth Park

Savannah's twenty-two park squares are the organizing principle of the Historic District — each one a different scale, a different mood, a different set of surrounding architecture. Day One uses them as waypoints rather than destinations, walking the grid from the river south to Forsyth Park.

MORNING 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM**8:30 AM**

Johnson Square & the Northern Squares

Start at Johnson Square — the oldest and largest of Savannah's park squares, laid out by James Oglethorpe in 1733 at the city's founding. The squares run in a grid pattern from here south to Forsyth Park. Walk the route that passes through Chippewa Square (where the Forrest Gump bench scenes were filmed — the bench is in the Savannah History Museum now, not the square), Wright Square, and Telfair Square. Each square is different. Each one is worth the stop.

Insider tip: The squares are busiest in the late morning. The best time to walk them is before 9am when the light is soft and the streets are quiet under the oak canopy. Spanish moss absorbs sound as well as light — the Historic District at dawn is one of the quieter urban experiences in America.

10:00 AM

Cathedral of St. John the Baptist

The twin spires of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist are visible from most of the Historic District — a French Gothic Revival building begun in 1873 and considered the finest Catholic cathedral in the American South. The interior is extraordinary: hand-painted murals, imported stained glass, and the largest pipe organ in Georgia. Free to enter most mornings.

Insider tip: The cathedral is at the intersection of Abercorn and Harris Streets, one block east of Lafayette Square. Lafayette Square itself is one of the finest of the twenty-two — the Andrew Low House and the Flannery O'Connor Birthplace flank it on opposite sides.

11:00 AM

Forsyth Park

Walk south through the grid to Forsyth Park — the largest green space in the Historic District, thirty acres anchored by a cast-iron fountain that has become the image most associated with Savannah. The park is where the city comes to run, walk dogs, play chess, and hold the Saturday farmers market. The café on the north end serves the best coffee in the immediate area.

Insider tip: The Forsyth Park fountain was cast in the same mold as a fountain in Prades, France and installed in 1858. On a clear morning it catches the light in a way that photographs almost never convey. Walk the full perimeter before you leave the park.

AFTERNOON 12:30 PM - 6:00 PM**12:30 PM****Lunch on Broughton Street or City Market**

Broughton Street is Savannah's main commercial artery and has the best concentration of lunch options in the Historic District. The Collins Quarter on Bull Street for the best brunch menu and specialty coffee in the city — the weekend waits are long but the weekday versions are manageable. Or Foxy Loxy on Bull Street for a café and bar that doubles as one of Savannah's more characterful lunch spots.

Insider tip: The Collins Quarter is the most photographed café in Savannah for the British Colonial aesthetic and the avocado toast, but the coffee program and the all-day menu are genuinely good. Arrive before noon or after 1:30pm.

2:00 PM**SCAD Museum of Art**

The Savannah College of Art and Design operates one of the most interesting contemporary art museums in the South — housed in a beautifully restored 1853 Romanesque Revival building in the Historic District. The permanent and visiting collections are consistently strong. Free for SCAD students; general admission is modest. Allow ninety minutes.

Insider tip: SCAD has transformed Savannah over the past four decades — the college now enrolls over 15,000 students and has restored more historic buildings in the city than any other single entity. The SCAD Museum is the most visible result.

3:30 PM**River Street & Factor's Walk**

Walk north to the Savannah River waterfront. River Street runs along the riverbank below the bluff — a cobblestoned commercial strip of shops, bars, and restaurants. The more interesting walk is Factor's Walk above it: the iron bridges and ramps connecting the bluff-level streets to the river warehouses, built in the 1820s when cotton factors (brokers) worked between the upper and lower levels of the city.

Insider tip: The cobblestones on River Street were ships' ballast, brought from Europe and deposited here as ships took on cotton cargo. The stones are uneven and difficult to walk in heeled shoes. The warehouses have been bars and restaurants since the 1970s — the architecture is better than the food.

EVENING 7:00 PM - LATE**7:00 PM****Dinner — The Best in Savannah**

The Grey on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is the finest restaurant in Savannah — housed in a 1938 Greyhound bus terminal, with a menu built around the Georgia coast and a wine list that has been seriously considered. Book well ahead at thegreyrestaurant.com. Or The Grey Market next door for a more casual version of the same kitchen without a reservation. Both are essential.

Insider tip: The Grey is housed in a restored Art Deco Greyhound terminal and is one of the most beautiful restaurant rooms in the American South. The bar has walk-in seats. If the dining room is booked, eat at the bar and order the pimento cheese and whatever is on the daily fish.

9:30 PM**Evening in the Squares**

Savannah's open container law makes the evening squares genuinely lively. Take a drink from any bar and walk. Madison Square, Monterey Square, and Calhoun Square in the southern part of the Historic District are the quietest in the evening — the architecture is the finest and the students from SCAD give the streets a particular energy after dark.

Insider tip: The Leopold's Ice Cream on Broughton Street has been operating since 1919 and is the correct late-evening stop. The burnt almond ice cream is the house specialty. The line moves faster than it looks.

DAY TWO

Bonaventure Cemetery · Tybee Island · Victorian District

The second day moves to the edges of the city. Bonaventure Cemetery is the most beautiful outdoor space in Savannah and one of the finest Victorian cemeteries in America. Tybee Island is seventeen miles east and the closest beach. The Victorian District south of the Historic core is where the city's independent food scene is currently strongest.

MORNING 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**9:00 AM**

Bonaventure Cemetery

The Victorian cemetery on the Wilmington River, three miles east of the Historic District. Live oaks draped in Spanish moss, marble monuments, and the graves of Johnny Mercer and Conrad Aiken. The cemetery became internationally known after appearing in 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' — the Bird Girl sculpture that appeared on the cover is now at the Telfair Museum, but the site is extraordinary in its own right. Allow ninety minutes. Take a rideshare.

Insider tip: Bonaventure is a functioning cemetery — walk quietly and respectfully. The most beautiful sections are in the older eastern half near the river. The morning light through the Spanish moss is one of the specific images Savannah is famous for, and it delivers.

11:00 AM

Tybee Island

Seventeen miles east on US-80, accessible by rideshare in about thirty minutes. Tybee Island is a small barrier island with a broad beach, a historic lighthouse (1736 — the oldest and tallest in Georgia), and a genuinely local character that beach towns in the South tend to lose. The Tybee Island Light Station is worth the climb for the coastal views. The beach is best in the morning before the afternoon heat.

Insider tip: Tybee is the correct answer to the beach question in Savannah. The island has resisted the full resort development that hit other Georgia barrier islands. The Back River side is quieter and better for walking. Bring sunscreen — the reflected light off the sand is serious.

AFTERNOON 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM**1:00 PM****Lunch Back in Savannah**

The Public Kitchen & Bar on Jefferson Street for a reliable, good-value lunch in a former public market building. Or Husk Savannah on Drayton Street — the second outpost of the Sean Brock kitchen, serving the same Southern ingredient philosophy as the Charleston original in a beautiful 1893 mansion. Book ahead for Husk; the Public Kitchen is walk-in friendly.

Insider tip: Husk Savannah is housed in a Victorian mansion that the kitchen has not tried to renovate away from its domestic scale. The porch and the bar in the library are the best seats.

2:30 PM**The Owens-Thomas House & Regency Architecture**

The finest Regency architecture in America, designed by William Jay in 1819 and now operated by the Telfair Museums. The interiors are exceptional — the first indoor plumbing in Savannah, original paint colors, and one of the most complete surviving examples of the English Regency domestic interior in existence. The slave quarters in the rear are honestly interpreted. Book at telfair.org.

Insider tip: William Jay arrived in Savannah at age 22 and built three of the finest buildings in the city before returning to England. The Owens-Thomas House, the Telfair Academy, and the Scarborough House are his three Savannah commissions. The Owens-Thomas is the finest.

4:00 PM**Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences**

The first public art museum in the American South, housed in William Jay's 1818 Telfair mansion. The permanent collection covers American and European art from the 18th to 20th centuries; the Bird Girl sculpture from the 'Midnight in the Garden' cover is now here. The Jepson Center of Modern and Contemporary Art next door is the modern extension — a glass pavilion with strong temporary exhibitions.

Insider tip: The combined Telfair Museums ticket covers the Academy, the Jepson Center, and the Owens-Thomas House — the best-value arts purchase in Savannah.

EVENING 7:00 PM - LATE**7:00 PM****Dinner in the Victorian District**

The Florence on Waters Avenue is the finest Italian restaurant in Savannah — wood-fired, seriously sourced, and one of the best restaurants in the city by any measure. Book ahead. Or Husk Savannah if you haven't been. For something more casual: The Vault Kitchen & Market on Jefferson Street for good cocktails and a reliable seasonal menu in a former bank vault.

Insider tip: The Victorian District south of the Historic core is where Savannah's independent restaurant scene concentrates. Waters Avenue and its cross streets have the city's best casual dining. The neighbourhood is less beautiful than the Historic District and more genuinely local.

Late Night**The Bar Scene**

Savannah's open container law and the city's genuine appreciation of a long evening make the bar scene one of the more enjoyable in the South. The Alley Cat Lounge on Congress Street for live music in a narrow space that has been a Savannah institution for decades. Artillery on Bull Street for serious cocktails. The Pirates' House — one of the oldest buildings in Georgia (1733) — for a beer in genuinely historic surroundings.

Insider tip: The Pirates' House is tourist-facing but the history is real. The building dates to 1733, making it contemporary with the city's founding. The basement tunnels that allegedly led to the river are sealed but documented.

WHERE TO EAT

The No-Tourist-Trap Food Guide

Prices per person, excl. drinks. Bar seats available at every listed restaurant.

BREAKFAST & COFFEE

The Collins Quarter

\$8–18

151 Bull Street, Historic District

Savannah's finest café — British Colonial aesthetic, excellent specialty coffee, all-day brunch menu. Avocado toast is what everyone photographs; the coffee program is what you're there for. Arrive before noon on weekdays.

Foxy Loxy Café

\$6–14

1919 Bull Street, Victorian District

Independent café and bar with one of the better coffee programs in the city. The back courtyard is the best outdoor seating in Savannah on a good morning.

Back in the Day Bakery

\$5–12

2403 Bull Street

Savannah's beloved bakery. The homemade pop tarts and the brown butter cupcake are the orders. Worth the short walk south of the Historic District.

LUNCH

Husk Savannah

\$25–45

12 West Oglethorpe Ave

The Sean Brock Southern-ingredient kitchen in a beautiful 1893 mansion. Same philosophy as the Charleston original. Book ahead. Porch and library bar are the best seats.

The Public Kitchen & Bar

\$14–22

1 W Liberty Street

Good-value lunch in the old Public Market building. Reliable, locally sourced, walk-in friendly. The shrimp and grits is the correct order.

Zunzi's

\$8–15

108 E York Street

The South African sandwich shop that has been a Savannah cult object since 1989. The Conquistador chicken sandwich with Zunzi sauce. Cash preferred. Line moves fast.

DINNER

The Grey

\$50–80

109 MLK Jr. Blvd

The finest restaurant in Savannah in a restored 1938 Art Deco Greyhound terminal. Georgia coast ingredients, seriously considered wine list. Book well ahead at thegreyrestaurant.com.

The Florence

\$35–55

1 W Victory Drive, Victorian District

The finest Italian in Savannah. Wood-fired, seasonal, seriously sourced. Book ahead.

The Grey Market

\$18–30

109 MLK Jr. Blvd

The casual daytime version of The Grey kitchen next door. No reservations, excellent sandwiches and pastries, the same sourcing philosophy. One of the best casual spots in the city.

The Vault Kitchen & Market

\$25–40

219 W Bryan Street

Former bank vault turned cocktail bar and seasonal kitchen. Reliable food, excellent cocktails, good bar seats.

Garibaldi's Café

\$30–50

315 W Congress Street

Italian-influenced fine dining that has been one of the best restaurants in Savannah for three decades. The pan-seared crispy flounder is the house signature.

BARS & LATE NIGHT**Artillery**

\$12–18

307 Bull Street

Serious cocktail bar in the Historic District. The most considered cocktail program in Savannah. Knowledgeable staff, rotating seasonal menu.

Alley Cat Lounge

\$5–10

114 Barnard Street

Live music institution on Congress Lane. Narrow, loud, genuine. The opposite of a tourist bar.

Leopold's Ice Cream

\$4–8

212 E Broughton Street

Since 1919. The burnt almond ice cream is the house specialty. Correct late-evening stop. Line moves.

The Pirates' House

\$6–12

20 E Broad Street

One of the oldest buildings in Georgia (1733). Beer in genuinely historic surroundings. Tourist-facing but the history is real.

The Shrimp & Grits Note

The Lowcountry invented it. The Grey and Husk both do definitive versions. Order it at least once.

NAVIGATING SAVANNAH

On Foot & Getting Around

Savannah's Historic District is one of the most walkable areas in America. The grid of squares is designed for pedestrian movement — the squares slow traffic and reward walking. The DOT (Downtown Savannah Transit) free shuttle covers the Historic District core. Rideshare is essential for Bonaventure Cemetery, Tybee Island, and the Victorian District restaurants.

On Foot

Forsyth Park to River Street: 20 minutes. The squares grid is 2.5 miles north to south. The Historic District is entirely flat and entirely walkable. The brick and cobblestone streets are uneven — wear comfortable shoes. The open container law means you can take a drink from any bar into the streets — plastic cups only.

DOT Free Shuttle

The Downtown Savannah Transit free shuttle runs loops through the Historic District connecting the major visitor areas, the hotels, and the parking facilities. Runs daily. No app required — flag and board. Most useful for the River Street to City Market connection.

Rideshare

Uber and Lyft are reliable in Savannah. Essential for: Bonaventure Cemetery (3 miles, 10 min), Tybee Island (17 miles, 30 min), the Victorian District (1 mile south of the Historic core), and Savannah/Hilton Head Airport.

Getting To & From Savannah

Savannah/Hilton Head Airport (SAV)

8 miles west of downtown. Rideshare: 15–20 min. No public transit option.

Amtrak — Savannah Station

2611 Seaboard Coastline Dr. Silver Meteor and Palmetto trains to New York (11h) and Miami (8h). Station is 3 miles west; rideshare required.

From Charleston, SC

2 hours north by car or Greyhound. GoingSolo.Life Charleston guide is the natural companion.

From Atlanta

4 hours west by car. Greyhound bus service available.

CONTINGENCY

Backup Plans

Savannah in the rain is a city of covered arcades, covered porches, and bars.

Telfair Museums (all three sites)

The Telfair Academy, the Jepson Center, and the Owens-Thomas House together constitute the most comprehensive arts and architecture experience in Savannah. The combined ticket is the right choice. Allow a full day across all three.

Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum

Housed in the William Scarborough House (1819) — another William Jay design — the museum covers Savannah's maritime history with exceptional model ships and maritime artifacts. The garden is one of the best in the city.

Savannah History Museum

Housed in the restored 1860 Central of Georgia Railway passenger station. The Forrest Gump bench is here. The Civil War and colonial period collections are strong. Good introduction to the city's history on arrival.

First African Baptist Church

Founded in 1773, the oldest continuously active African American congregation in North America. The building dates to 1859 and contains holes in the floor that were used by enslaved people hiding on the Underground Railroad. Guided tours available.

Green-Meldrim House

The finest Gothic Revival house in Savannah (1853), used as General Sherman's headquarters during his occupation of the city in December 1864. The interior is remarkably intact. Tours by appointment.

Queue-Beating Strategies

- The Grey: Book at thegreyrestaurant.com weeks ahead. Bar walk-ins are the fallback.
- Husk Savannah: Book ahead. Porch and library bar take walk-ins most nights.
- Owens-Thomas House: Book at telfair.org. Timed entry, small groups.
- Bonaventure: No booking required. Weekday mornings before 10am are quietest.
- Collins Quarter: Arrive before noon or after 1:30pm to avoid the brunch queue.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Know Your Neighborhoods

Savannah is organized around its twenty-two squares. Here are the areas that matter most.

The Historic District

THE SQUARES & THE CORE

The twenty-two park squares laid out in Oglethorpe's 1733 plan, running from River Street south to Forsyth Park. The most intact colonial and antebellum urban fabric in America.

Victorian District

FOOD & INDEPENDENT LIFE

South of the Historic core, centered on Waters Avenue. The Florence, Foxy Loxy, and the Back in the Day Bakery. Less beautiful than the squares but more genuinely local.

Forsyth Park Area

THE PARK & THE SOUTH END

The southern anchor of the Historic District. The park itself is thirty acres of the finest landscape in the city. The surrounding streets have the best-preserved Victorian residential architecture.

Tybee Island

THE BEACH

17 miles east. The closest and most genuinely local beach on the Georgia coast. The lighthouse, the Back River, and a barrier island that has resisted full resort development.

River Street & Factor's Walk

THE WATERFRONT

The riverbank below the bluff — cobblestoned, commercial, and the most visited stretch in Savannah. Factor's Walk above it is architecturally more interesting.

Starland District

CREATIVE SOUTH

The southernmost residential neighborhood with a growing concentration of independent studios, cafés, and restaurants. The most interesting area for an afternoon walk beyond the Historic District.

Midtown

LOCAL & UNDERSTATED

West of the Starland District — Savannah's most genuinely residential area, largely unknown to visitors. Worth knowing if you want to understand what a Savannah neighborhood looks like without the tourist overlay.

Bonaventure Area

CEMETERY & THE WILMINGTON RIVER

3 miles east of the Historic District. The Victorian cemetery that is one of the finest outdoor spaces in the American South. Walk the older eastern sections near the river.

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU

What Nobody Tells You About Savannah

Eight things that actually matter.

The open container law is real

You can legally carry a drink in a plastic cup on any public street in the Historic District. This is not a loophole — it was specifically designed by the city. No glass. No bottles. Plastic cups only.

The heat is serious

May through September, Savannah operates under heat and humidity that requires management. Start early, rest between 1 and 4pm, carry water. The morning and evening are when the city is comfortable.

Midnight in the Garden is not the whole story

The book made Savannah famous but the city was extraordinary before it and is more interesting than the book's locations suggest. The squares, the architecture, and the cemetery are the real story.

The Spanish moss is not a parasite

Spanish moss is a bromeliad that takes moisture and nutrients from the air — it doesn't harm the trees it grows on. It is native to the American Southeast and is one of the defining features of the Lowcountry landscape.

Walk through the squares, not around them

The squares are not obstacles — they are the point. Every car route in the Historic District goes around them. Every walking route goes through them. Walk through every one you pass.

The Grey requires planning

The finest restaurant in Savannah books weeks ahead. Do it before you land. The bar seats are the walk-in fallback but they go quickly on weekends.

SCAD changed the city

The Savannah College of Art and Design enrolled its first students in 1979 in a single building. It now enrolls over 15,000 students and has restored more historic buildings than any other entity. The creative energy is real.

Savannah and Charleston are not the same city

They are two hours apart and both worth two days. Charleston is more formal, architecturally denser, and more actively curated for visitors. Savannah is more relaxed, slightly more bohemian, and more willing to let you find it yourself.

CONNECTIONS

The Southern Charm Connection

Savannah sits at the geographic heart of the Southern Charm series — two hours south of Charleston, four hours north of Jacksonville, and three hours east of Atlanta. The city is also the starting point for the Georgia coastal route south through Brunswick and the Golden Isles. As a cruise departure point, the Port of Jacksonville is the closest terminal, two hours south.

The Southern Charm Series

Charleston, SC 2 hours · Car or Greyhound · from \$25

The most natural companion city. Direct bus service on Greyhound. GoingSolo.Life Charleston guide is the companion volume.

Atlanta, GA 4 hours · Car or bus

Direct Greyhound service. GoingSolo.Life Atlanta guide available in the Southern Charm series.

Jacksonville, FL 2 hours · Car

Closest cruise terminal. JAXPORT serves Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian. No direct train connection.

Brunswick & The Golden Isles 3 hours · Car

Jekyll Island, St. Simons Island, and the Georgia coast. The natural extension of a Savannah trip south. No public transit option.

Hilton Head Island, SC 1 hour · Car

The closest resort island. No public transit. Worth a half-day if you have a car.

Before You Leave — Final Checklist

- Screenshot Day 1 and Day 2 schedules for offline use
- Book The Grey for dinner at thegreyrestaurant.com — weeks ahead
- Book Owens-Thomas House at telfair.org
- Download Google Maps Savannah offline before you arrive
- Load Uber or Lyft — essential for Bonaventure and Tybee
- Bring a reusable plastic cup for the open container experience
- Bring sunscreen — the Tybee reflected light is serious

Savannah awaits.

The squares, the moss, the open container law,
and the finest restaurant in the American South in a bus terminal.
Slow down. Stay awhile. The city rewards it.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- Screenshot Day 1 and Day 2 schedules for offline use
- Book The Grey at thegreyrestaurant.com — weeks ahead
- Book Owens-Thomas House at telfair.org
- Download Google Maps Savannah offline before you arrive
- Load Uber or Lyft — essential for Bonaventure and Tybee
- Bring a reusable plastic cup for the open container streets
- Sunscreen — the Tybee reflected light is serious

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.



goingsolo.life/maps/savannah

GoingSolo.Life

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.