



# charleston

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## The Best Beaches To...

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Melissa Bigner

Part of the glory of living in the Lowcountry is our quick-fix proximity to miles upon miles of shoreline. Logging beach time is a prerequisite of summer, so read on for a list of ideal sandy spots for your activity of choice

### Take a Long Walk

*Opt out of the towel-to-towel tourist fray with these options for splendid solitude*

- Bull Island: the Atlantic side
- Capers Island: anywhere you don't see boats anchored
- Edisto Beach State Park: Head north from the park entrance.
- Folly Beach: either far end
- Kiawah: south of Beachwalker County Park
- Isle of Palms: 3rd Avenue to Breach Inlet and 30th to 45th avenues
- Sullivan's Island: Station 18 to Fort Moultrie

### Tie One on at a Tiki Bar

*Sip a fruity drink while perched on a surf-side stool at these watering holes*

- Folly Beach: Blu Restaurant & Bar at The Tides Folly Beach Hotel, 1 Center St.; (843) 588-6658, [WWW.BLUFOLLYBEACH.COM](http://WWW.BLUFOLLYBEACH.COM)

- Mount Pleasant: Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina, 20 Patriots Point Rd.; (843) 856-0028, [WWW.CHARLESTONHARBORRESORT.COM](http://WWW.CHARLESTONHARBORRESORT.COM)

### **Picnic & Play Beach Games With Family**

*Get your fried chicken and ladder golf on at these mellow stretches perfect for family fun*

- Folly Beach: Head west of 6th Avenue for the end of the isle where toddlers outnumber surfers.
- Isle of Palms: Choosing 3rd Avenue to Breach Inlet or 30th to 45th avenues gets you away from the Windjammer's action.
- Sullivan's Island: Families rule the island, but for room (and a boardwalk entry great for pulling wagons of gear), aim for Station 18.

### **Hide Out**

*Crave an under-the-radar getaway? Check out these off-the-beaten oases*

A minor escape: Sneak over to Sunrise Park (on James Island's Wampler Drive next to the James Island Yacht Club) for its little-known view of the harbor.

A major escape: Even the paparazzi won't find you at The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Dewees Island, or Seabrook Island.

### **Sunbathe**

- With SPF: Sullivan's
- With tattoos: Folly, Isle of Palms
- With teenagers: Isle of Palms

### **Ride Horses**

*Turn those Fabio fantasies of galloping through the surf into reality*

- Seabrook Island: For those with at least three years riding experience, skills to trot and canter, and \$95, Seabrook's North Beach awaits as the only place in the Lowcountry where you can rent a horse and ride across the sand. (843) 768-7541, [WWW.DISCOVERSEABROOK.COM](http://WWW.DISCOVERSEABROOK.COM)

### **Hit a Half-Rubber**

*Played with a broomstick bat and half a rubber ball, this baseball takeoff has been a Lowcountry beach staple since 1910. Get your gear at a Piggly Wiggly near the beach (or [halfrubber.com](http://halfrubber.com)), see "Picnic & Play Beach Games" for great spots, and check out these tourneys*

- Folly Beach: The Man of the Sand is the only beach-front tourney left, because most suitable areas have become too crowded. June 11 & 12, behind the parking lot next to

The Tides Folly Beach Hotel, 1 Center St. 18 and older, \$100 per team of 3 or 4 players. (843) 270-9164, [WWW.HALFRUBBER.COM](http://WWW.HALFRUBBER.COM)

■ Isle of Palms: 13th Annual Half-Rubber Tournament, August 20, Isle of Palms Rec Center, 24 28th Ave. (843) 886-8294, [WWW.IOP.NET](http://WWW.IOP.NET)

Play—or Watch—Volleyball

■ Isle of Palms: The three courts on the island's Front Beach area are open year-round to the public. Watch Charleston Beach Volleyball leagues play there Wednesdays and Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (or snag an empty court for you and yours). Catch pickup players on the court behind the Windjammer, or see pros and semi-pros play at the Windjammer Invitational on August 21, starting at 8:30 a.m.

(843) 367-5253, [WWW.WINDJAMMER.COM](http://WWW.WINDJAMMER.COM)

■ Sullivan's Island: Head to Station 22 for friendly pickup games with Charleston Beach Volleyball players. Sundays, 5-8 p.m., through August 29. \$5. (843) 343-7802, [WWW.CHARLESTONVOLLEYBALL.NET](http://WWW.CHARLESTONVOLLEYBALL.NET)

### **Scope Out Six-Packs & Bikini Babes**

*Looking for the GTL types? There's no shortage of tanned, toned bods at these hangouts*

■ Folly Beach: the Washout and behind The Tides Folly Beach Hotel

■ Isle of Palms: on Front Beach behind the Windjammer

Land on a Cam

*Score your 15 seconds of fame or log on to scope out tides, waves, and weather*

■ Folly Beach: the Washout, [follysurfcam.com](http://follysurfcam.com)

■ Isle of Palms: Isle of Palms Pier

([WWW.CAROLINACOASTSURFCLUB.ORG/SURFCAM.SHTML](http://WWW.CAROLINACOASTSURFCLUB.ORG/SURFCAM.SHTML)) or the Windjammer

([WWW.JAMMERCAM.COM](http://WWW.JAMMERCAM.COM))

### **Get a Sand Fix Downtown**

■ Peninsula: Low tide at East Bay Street and East Battery exposes a tiny triangular spit that causes beach-loving diehards to jump the railing for some time in the sand. Kids, dogs, and the occasional windsurfer show up here. Watch your step, though, as it's not barefoot-friendly.

Camp

*Stake your tent at these two winning spots—the only places in the area where*

*waterfront camping is permitted—for primo stargazing*

- Capers Island
- Edisto Beach State Park

### **Bike**

*Year in and out, these beaches prove great for public-access cruising. Since they rim barrier islands, the hard-packed sections shift, but typically the damp areas above the waterline are best*

- Kiawah Island: Beachwalker County Park
- Isle of Palms: accesses above and below Front Beach
- Sullivan's Island: from Station 30 to Station 16

### **Watch Seabirds Nest—From Afar**

- Crab Bank Island Seabird Sanctuary, Charleston Harbor: Only anchoring is allowed from March 15 to October 15, but beach landings are welcome the rest of the year.

### **Skinny Dip**

*Swimming in the buff isn't legal in these parts, but if you dare to bare it all, you might get away without getting busted on these remote beaches*

- Bull Island: Atlantic side
- Folly Beach: far, far east and west ends—but be quick about it
- Capers Island: anywhere after the day boaters have headed home (and a respectful distance from campers)

### **Catch a Surf Contest**

- Folly Beach: Wahine Classic at the Washout, June 18 & 19, (843) 343-4047, [follybeachwahine.com](http://follybeachwahine.com); McKevlin's Gromfest, July 23, (843) 588-2247, [WWW.MCKEVLINS.COM](http://WWW.MCKEVLINS.COM)
- Isle of Palms: Joe Hiller Longboard Classic, Isle of Palms Pier, October 8 & 9, [WWW.SSC.SURFESA.ORG](http://WWW.SSC.SURFESA.ORG)

### **Let Your Dog Roam Free(ish)**

*Fido's pretty restricted on our shores. Sullivan's has the strictest rules: aside from permitted hours and leash laws, all dogs (visitors' and locals' alike) must sport a tag which can only be purchased from town hall during weekday office hours—not the most convenient setup for a spontaneous weekend jaunt. For those who want to pop out to the beach to play with their pooches on a moment's notice, here's where to go*

- Folly Beach: Tag required for residents; visitors exempt. Leashed dogs allowed on

beach May 1-September 30, except from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m.

■ James Island County Park: Bring off-leash dogs to the fenced-in dog park year-round to splash in the lake and dig in the sand. \$1 per human, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. through Labor Day, (843) 795-7275, [WWW.CCPRC.COM](http://WWW.CCPRC.COM)

■ Isle of Palms: Tag required for residents; visitors exempt. Leashed dogs allowed year-round. Off-leash hours: April 1-September 15, 5 a.m.-8 a.m.; September 16-March 31, 4 p.m.-10 a.m.

■ Kiawah Beachwalker County Park: Leashed dogs welcome year-round (9 a.m.-7 p.m. through Labor Day), \$7 per car.

### **Win a Sand sculpting Contest**

*Whether you're a drip-castle rookie or aspire to render Buckingham Palace out of sand, Lowcountry beaches are your playground. See "Picnic & Play Beach Games" for the quieter spots to practice your masterpieces, and check out the all-ages annual festivals below for a little competitive creativity next year*

■ Isle of Palms: Piccolo Spoleto Sand Sculpting Contest takes place on Front Beach in May, (843) 886-8294, [WWW.IOP.NET](http://WWW.IOP.NET)

■ Folly Beach Sea and Sand Festival: third weekend each April, [WWW.WIX.COM/UNDERTHEOAKS/SEASAND](http://WWW.WIX.COM/UNDERTHEOAKS/SEASAND)

### **Hunt for Shells, Sharks Teeth, & More**

*Wander away from the crowds during an outgoing tide for stellar beachcombing*

■ Edisto Beach State Park: Head north of the entrance to find sharks teeth and bleached conchs riddled with worm holes.

■ Folly Beach: Nearby Morris Island has the best shelling stash in the Folly area, but the ends of Folly Beach have sharks teeth, starfish, and sand dollars, too. (Throw back the latter two if they are living.)

■ Kiawah: The western tip of Beachwalker County Park makes a terrific hunting ground for shells, especially after stormy seas.

### **Find a Boneyard Landscape**

*When sea levels rise and sands shift, maritime forests fall to the elements. What's left in the wake are sculptural remnants—mostly arthritic live oak trunks and roots—along the tide line of so-called "boneyard beaches"*

■ Bull Island: Follow the Atlantic-side beach or maritime forest trails to the northern tip of the island.

■ Capers Island: Head to the middle of the Atlantic side.

- Edisto Island: Take the Botany Bay Plantation trails to the beach and walk north.
- Folly Beach: Go to the north end towards Morris Island.

*\* Tip: To watch the sun sink into a sandy or watery horizon, your best chance is to head to the west side of the outlying islands, as our East Coast coordinates are killer for sunrises but trickier for sunsets.*