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# A community for every vacation style

BY ASHLEY MCGEE

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3705 Palm Blvd. on Isle of Palms is nearly fully booked for 2022, with \$435,000 in rentals committed for the year. The owners, who live in Upstate New York, block out a few weeks for themselves and make a profit on the home the rest of the year. The Cassina Group/Provided

Vacationers and second home buyers are flocking to the Lowcountry, as evidenced by rising hotel occupancy rates and per room revenue as well as an influx of buyers, particularly from the Northeast and California.

For many, purchasing a vacation home is not only a dream come true but a profitable investment opportunity. The key, however, is deciding which Charleston area beach community best aligns with one's lifestyle and interests.

From bohemian to relaxed luxury, there is a Lowcountry beach suited for every vacation style.

## **Kiawah and Seabrook Islands**

When it comes to seaside luxury, few places can compare to the world-class beaches of Kiawah and Seabrook Islands.

Kiawah Island was ranked one of the "Happiest Seaside Towns" by Coastal Living, while neighboring Seabrook Island was voted "Best Restored Beach" by the American

## Shore & Beach Preservation Association.

Accolades aside, their appeal is obvious. Located just 25 miles from downtown Charleston, the two barrier islands are home to miles of privately owned beaches, gorgeous natural habitats, championship golf courses and more. Beachwalker County Park, operated by Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission, is the only beach on the island open to the public.



The Ocean Course on Kiawah Island was host to the 2021 PGA Championship in May. Wade Spees/Staff

WADE SPEES

Seabrook Island beaches are also private to residents and their guests, so purchasing a vacation home here will offer stunning sunrise and sunset views few will ever get to see.

The islands are also an ideal locale for anyone looking to live out their professional golf fantasy. The Kiawah Island Golf Resort's Ocean Course has hosted the PGA Golf Championship tournament two times in 2012 and in 2021.

Those looking for a golf membership should also consider the Seabrook Island Club. The club's two courses, Ocean Winds and Crooked Oaks, are open to members, group outings and events.

An address in these exclusive zip codes will come at a premium price. As of December, the average sales price for a single-family detached home on Kiawah Island was \$2,266,201.

# Folly Beach

Prefer a more upbeat and energetic atmosphere?

Referred to as the “Edge of America,” by locals, Folly Beach is between the Folly River and the Atlantic Ocean.

Its miles of shoreline are the main draw, with plenty of beach access points. There are small paid parking lots along the beachfront as well as near the pier, but if you’re looking to purchase a vacation home here, keep in mind that road shoulder parking is allowed in residential areas.

Folly Beach is also known for its seasonal festivals — Bill Murray’s Polar Plunge, Taste of Folly, Sea & Sand Festival and July Fourth fireworks along with the Flip Flop drop on New Year’s Eve, which attract hundreds, and in some cases thousands of visitors, to the town.



Along with live music and cooking demonstrations, the annual Taste of Folly street festival features a hot dog eating and oyster shucking contests. This year's festival will be held on January 14-15. Stephen Massar/Special to The Post and Courier

The main thoroughfare of Center Street greets beachgoers with sporting shops, restaurants and bars. The street ends at a nine-story, beachfront hotel.

Folly's centerpiece attraction, the Edwin S. Taylor Fishing Pier, is currently under construction with completion expected in the Spring of 2023. The gift shop and

observation deck are open to the public while replacement construction continues for the remainder of the pier structure. It's also home to the famous Morris Island Lighthouse.

Real estate options on Folly Beach are more varied compared to other Lowcountry beaches. Current listings include a two-bedroom, two-bathroom, 1,064-square-foot condo in Marshview Villas for \$475,00 and a recently renovated 4,192-square-foot beachfront home at 309 W. Ashley Avenue for \$4.5 million that sits on just under a quarter of an acre mere steps from the sand and surf.

## **Sullivan's Island**

If you want a seaside setting studded with some of the region's priciest homes shielded by the dunes, Sullivan's Island offers some of the area's widest beaches with close-up views of ships entering and leaving the harbor.

Popular nearby attractions include Fort Moultrie and the Sullivan's Island Lighthouse. Homes on the island also offer convenient access to Middle Street, which sports a number of shops and restaurants next to a town park that offers tennis and basketball courts.

And don't worry about rubbing elbows with people staying in hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts inns. The island offers short-terms rentals, but no other accommodations for transient lodging.

## **Isle of Palms**

If you are looking for a family beach with a flare for fun, check out the Isle of Palms. Lined by scores of homes, the windswept stretch of sand, originally named Hunting Island and then Long Island, beckons families to the coast year-round.

On the northern end of the island is the private gated community of Wild Dunes with a hotel and condo, cottage and vacation home rentals as well as amenities such as golf and tennis.



Among Isle of Palms current listings is 3705 Palm Boulevard. Built in 2002, the property was fully renovated in 2018. The second row home features seven bedrooms, five-and-a-half bathrooms and measures an estimated 4,700 square feet.

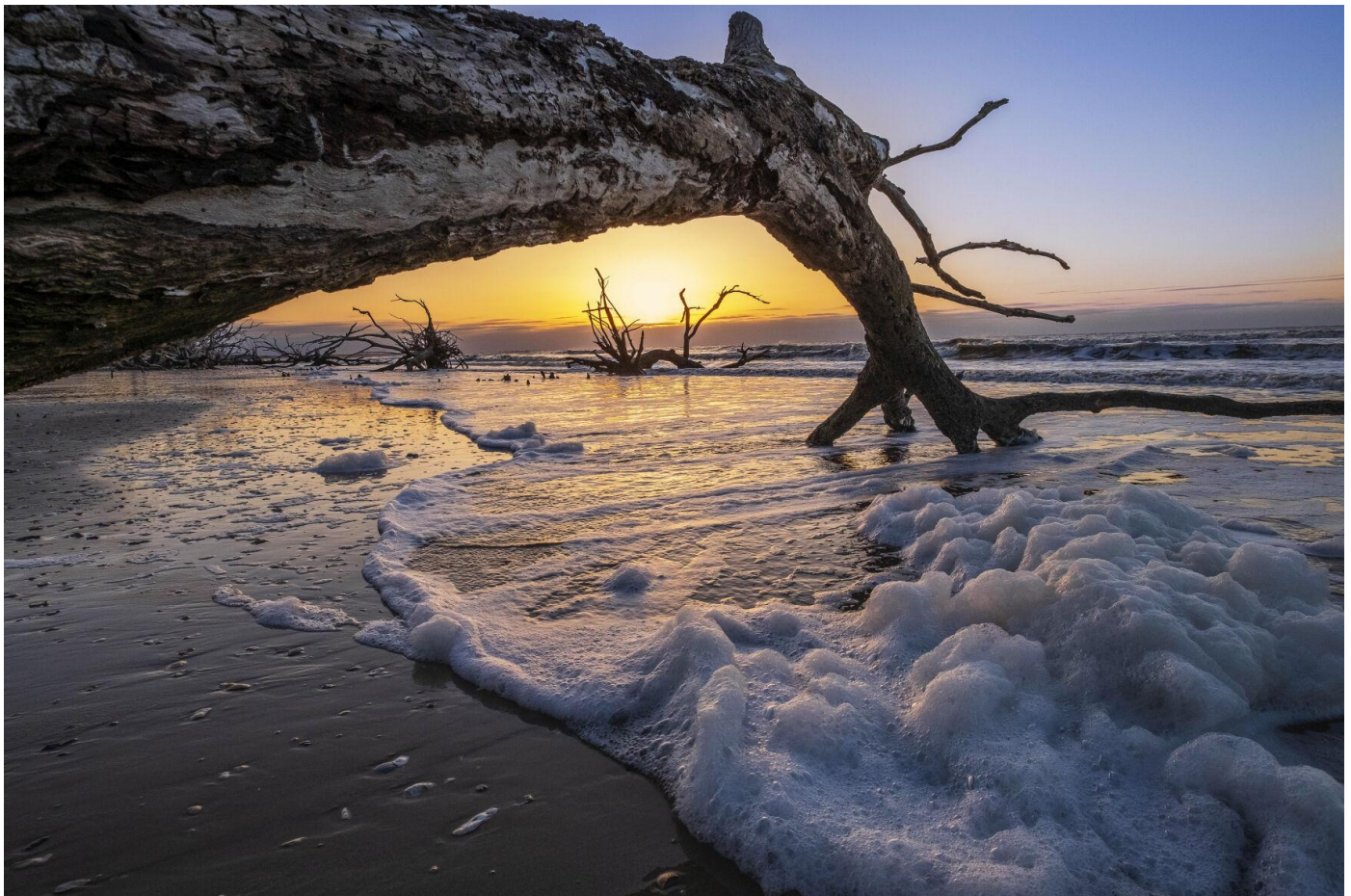
Interior highlights include a modern kitchen with high-end appliances, two large living rooms, a third-floor game room, refinished hardwood floors and an elevator that services all levels. There are multiple front porches that offer wonderful ocean breezes and views of the ocean as well as two rear porches that overlook the new swimming pool with a hot tub element. The home is listed for \$3,995,000 by The Cassina Group.

## **Edisto Island**

Looking to avoid the traffic and escape the crowds at Isle of Palms or Folly Beach? Then Edisto Island might be just the place for you. At only an hour's drive from Charleston, there's plenty to explore around this quaint beach town.

The absence of noise, traffic lights and congestion is what lures residents and visitors alike to this barrier island.

On Edisto Island, the beach is the main event. With 37 public beach access points located along Palmetto Boulevard, there are plenty of opportunities to pick out your just-right spot. Some access points, but not all, provide off-street parking and dune walkovers.



Botany Bay Plantation Heritage Preserve's boneyard beach at sunrise.  
Matthew Fortner/Staff

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One of the most popular attractions on the island is the Botany Bay Plantation Heritage Preserve. Getting there will take some effort, as the dirt roads can be a little treacherous but it's worth the journey. The destination beach features two miles of unspoiled shoreline and a boneyard of dead trees along the sand.

During the weeks you aren't enjoying your home for personal use, there's no shortage of families looking for short-term vacation rentals. Many have made a visit to Edisto an annual tradition.

Edisto Island also happens to be one of the most affordable Lowcountry beach communities for those looking to invest, with the median sales price for a single-family detached home just \$735,000.

“The majority of waterfront communities in the Lowcountry are extremely desirable right now,” said Greg Gelber of AgentOwned Realty Co. “It really just comes down to why you want to live on the water — whether it

is for boating, fishing, surfing or incredible views, etcetera — and the location of the neighborhood or community.”

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