

About Columbia

Columbia was planned to be in the middle of it all! South Carolina's capital is at the precise geographic center of the state, born out of compromise between Charleston and the Upstate. Halfway between Miami and New York, the city is within an eight hour drive of half the country's population. More than 117,000 people live in Columbia, which is served by three interstate highways, Amtrak and the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. Despite



being a modern capital city, many historic homes, churches, gardens, grounds and civic buildings have been preserved and restored, which offer a historic glimpse into antebellum times. Theaters, galleries, dance companies, and museums also enrich downtown Columbia. The Riverbanks Zoo and Garden is considered one of the finest zoos in North America and is a must-see for anyone visiting Columbia. Walking, biking, canoeing and kayaking all are within minutes of the city center. Fifty-thousand-acre Lake Murray is 15 miles to the west, with 649 miles of shoreline and year-round boating, fishing, and sailing. Situated along the meandering Congaree River about 20 miles from Columbia, Congaree National Park is home to champion trees, incredible forest landscapes, and diverse plant and animal life. This almost 26,000-acre park protects the largest contiguous tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the United States. Known for its giant hardwoods and towering pines, the park's floodplain forest includes one of the highest canopies in the world and some of the tallest trees in the eastern United States. Congaree is a designated Globally Important Bird Area, an International Biosphere Reserve, and is host park to the Old Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center.

Columbia is also close to other unique southeastern travel destinations! Columbia is roughly 2.5 hours drive from both Asheville, North Carolina and Savannah, Georgia and between 1.5 and 3.5 hours from historic Charleston, South Carolina; the Blue Ridge National Parkway; and Atlanta, Georgia.

Climate

While many city guides describe Columbia's weather as being sunny and mild, warm and humid may be a better description of many summer days. The average daily temperature for February and March is 50° F. Precipitation is unpredictable but most days are generally sunny.

Other Things to Do In the Columbia Area

Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Garden

Riverbanks is home to more than 2,000 magnificent and fascinating animals and one of the nation's most beautiful and inspiring botanical gardens. The lush 170-acre site



features dynamic natural habitat exhibits, scenic river views, spectacular valley overlooks and significant historic landmarks. For more than 30 years, Riverbanks has provided individuals, families and groups with a common place to connect with and learn about the world's wildlife and wild places. Twice awarded the Governor's Cup for South Carolina's Most Outstanding Tourist Attraction, Riverbanks is the premier family choice for education and recreation in the Southeast.

Admission: Adults \$ 9.75. Daily park hours: 9:00am-5:00pm. Extended summer weekend hours: 9:00am-6:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays (April - September). Riverbanks Zoo & Garden is open every day except for Thanksgiving and Christmas days. Special closings may be announced. For more information and directions, please visit the Riverbanks Zoo website <http://www.riverbanks.org/>

South Carolina State Museum

Housed in the historic 1893 Columbia Mill textile building, our "biggest artifact," the South Carolina State Museum tells the story of South Carolina through our many exhibits and programs. Come and enjoy art, cultural history, natural history, science and technology. Many of the museum's displays are interconnected. You will find there is history in our art, artistic beauty in our natural history and science, and history behind our technology. All disciplines are also represented by



objects in the hands-on Stringer Discovery Center. Although no museum can display its entire collection, we offer a varied sampling of the wonders found both within our state and around the world. If you arrive in Columbia before the meeting and are looking for something to do, admission to the State Museum is only \$1 the first Sunday of every month (that would be June 3, 2007)! The museum is open Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sundays 1- 5 p.m, and Mondays May 31 to September 6. For more information, please visit the State Museum's website <http://www.museum.state.sc.us/index.htm>

Other Things to Do – Charleston, South Carolina

Fort Sumter National Monument, Charleston Harbor, South Carolina

The opening shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Take some time to visit this unique national landmark and explore how Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, Fort Wagner and the port of Charleston played pivotal roles in the Civil War. Fort Sumter National Monument also has one of the best collections of 19th century seacoast artillery anywhere in the United States. Fort Sumter is located in Charleston

Harbor and can be reached only by boat. The fort is open 10 am to 5:30 pm daily between April 1 and Labor Day. Tour boats operated by a National Park Service concessionaire leave from the Fort Sumter Tour Boat Facility at Liberty Square in downtown Charleston. Liberty Square is located on the Cooper River at the eastern end of Calhoun Street and includes the South Carolina Aquarium. For more information, please visit www.nps.gov/fosu

Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina

The palmetto tree has been a symbol of South Carolina since 1776 because the first Fort Moultrie was built of palmetto logs. The 9-1/2 hour battle of Sullivan's Island was the Revolutionary War's first decisive victory of American forces over the British Navy. Fort Moultrie is the only unit of the National Park System where the entire 171-year history of American seacoast defenses (1776-1947) can be traced. Fort Moultrie and Park Headquarters are both located at 1214 Middle Street on Sullivan's Island and are accessible by car. Fort Moultrie is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except for New Year's, Thanksgiving and Christmas Days. There is an entrance fee for Fort Moultrie: \$3.00 for adults, \$1.00 for seniors (62 and older), free for children (16 and under). A family fee (two or more adults) is \$5.00. For more information, visit Fort Moultrie's website: <http://www.nps.gov/fomo/>