

Quick Tips on Savannah, Georgia Courtesy of Conde Nast Traveller November 2008

Why: Savannah's hauntingly beautiful antebellum historic district is the largest in the country, with picturesque squares fringed by stately mansions. The antiques scene is eclectic, ranging from traditional dealers specializing in gilded Louis XIV consoles to quirky boutiques with a mix of vintage finds and locally designed originals.

What You'll Need: Sturdy shoes for navigating the uneven cobblestones and brightly colored basics to fit in with the Southern belles and gents. During the fall months, daytime temperatures hover in the mid-70s, but after dark you'll need a light sweater or jacket.

How to Get There: A one-hour flight from Atlanta, Savannah is also a short drive from Charleston, South Carolina (85 miles), and Jacksonville, Florida (121 miles). It's a \$25 cab ride from the airport to downtown.

What to Do: The city's best design and antiques shops are clustered on Whitaker and Bull streets north of Forsyth Park. Before setting out, get in the treasure-hunting mood at the 1868 **Mercer Williams House**, best known as the site of the murder chronicled in John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Mildly zealous tour guides (the only way to see the house) studiously avoid any mention of the crime, instead focusing on art dealer Jim Williams's witty and wide-ranging collection—there's everything from crystal candlesticks once owned by Martha Washington to eighteenth-century British oils (912-236-6352; mercerhouse.com; tours, \$13).

Circle to the front of the house and look for **Alex Raskin**, which sits on Bull Street facing Monterey Square. Every inch of the dusty shop—even the bathroom—is filled with furniture, mirrors, and paintings, ranging from a 1780 English book press to a brilliant green-and-red painted nineteenth-century Pakistani cupboard (441 Bull St.; 912-232-8205). Continue on to **Shop SCAD**, a showcase for work by Savannah College of Art and Design students, faculty, and alumni. The college's Working Class Studio line has funky melamine plates and graphic stationery, and there is an eclectic collection of well-priced jewelry—look for Allyson Ross's Gothic-inspired oxidized sterling silver pieces (340 Bull St.; 912-525-5180). Keep heading north on Bull toward Broughton Street. Big chains like Marc Jacobs and Banana Republic are quickly moving in, but there are more than a few independent gems, especially the **Paris Market**, a two-story wonderland of highly covetable goods. There's a music bar with wooden stools where you can listen to its handpicked albums, an apothecary at the back stocked with Aesop bath products, and vintage items like nineteenth-century carnival mask noses and antique miniature horseshoes. Snag the velvet window seat at the tiny café for a cappuccino break (36 W. Broughton St.; 912-232-1500). Farther down, @ **Home Vintage General**, owned by a SCAD graduate, has a nice mix of stationery and home goods, as well as vintage flash cards and aprons (320 W. Broughton St.; 912-201-0015).

The next morning, start the day in the up-and-coming Starland area. A 15-minute walk north of Forsyth Park, this still-gritty enclave has a folk-meets-hipster vibe and a handful of galleries and cafés. Be sure to stop by the **Back in the Day** bakery, a sweetly vintage spot with pastel-hued cupcakes and a cute collection of kid-size aprons (2403 Bull St.; 912-495-9292). Every Saturday, the local farmers' market has fresh produce, crafts, and food vendors turning out sausage-and-cheese biscuits, savory crêpes, and sweet potato waffles (starlandfarmersmarket.com). Back in the historic district, head straight for Whitaker Street, which has a cluster of worthwhile shops. A former gas station, **Peridot** has a quirky mix: a mid-century Danish tea service displayed near glazed turquoise Chinese candlesticks (400 Whitaker St.; 912-596-1117). Two-story **Arcanum** has a modern feel, with faux snakeskin tray tables and eerily lifelike tabletop horse heads (422 Whitaker St.; 912-236-6000). Across the street, **One Fish Two Fish** carries upmarket textiles and furniture, plus a tempting wall of Molton Brown bath and home goodies (401 Whitaker St.; 912-447-4600). The **Corner Door** is a tad froufrou, with a British-inflected assortment of Wedgwood figurines, old-fashioned copper bed warmers, and Art Deco teapots (417 Whitaker St.; 912-238-5869).

Where to Eat: The beloved **Sentient Bean**, on the south side of Forsyth Park, has a slightly threadbare look, a regular schedule of readings and movie showings, and the city's best coffee. You won't miss the eggs or butter in the supermoist vegan oatmeal raisin cookies (13 E. Park Ave; 912-232-4447; entrées, \$7). The mood is cozy at **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room**, a former boardinghouse with communal tables and a daily-changing menu of hearty Southern dishes, all served family-style. Dig into platters piled high with fried chicken and collard greens, and be prepared to make friends (107 W. Jones St.; 912-232-5997; \$16 per person). **Sweet Leaf Smokery & Eatery**, one block over from Forsyth, is popular with paint-spattered SCAD students and young locals. Barbecue traditionalists might not approve, but Granny Smith coleslaw lends a crunch to pulled pork sandwiches, and the corn pudding is a must (606 Abercorn St.; 912-447-5444; entrées, \$6–\$15). The city has no shortage of ultra-fancy restaurants, but foodies skip the tasting menus in favor of sumptuous locally sourced food at **Local 11 Ten**, a recently opened restaurant in a former bank. The constantly changing menu makes over Southern favorites: grilled Berkshire pork loin with roasted Georgia peaches and Anson Mills polenta, or seared local scallops with famous Benton's bacon, sweet corn, tomatoes, and basil (1110 Bull St.; 912-790-9000; entrées, \$25–\$42). **Cha Bella**, on the far end of the historic district, grows much of its own produce on its Hampton Island farm, but this is far from health food: luscious Georgia shrimp risotto with lemon and tarragon, and Kobe beef short ribs with creamed spinach ravioli (102 E. Broad St.; 912-790-7888; entrées, \$25–\$35).