

BUSINESS INSIDER

The best hotels in Charleston

- **Historic architecture, a buzzing culinary scene, and close proximity to great coastal scenery all make Charleston, South Carolina a popular year-round destination.**
- **The city's hotel portfolio is also attractive and showcases small, independent hotels and historic properties, as well as niche offerings from some bigger international brands.**
- **Outside of high season and specific festivals, entry-level rooms can be found at four-star hotels between \$199 and \$349 per night. Our top hotels have been chosen based on recent stays, desirable amenities, as well as reviews from trusted traveler sites.**

Despite a turbulent historic onslaught of hurricanes, fires, and military bombardment, Charleston, South Carolina remains one of the United States' best-preserved historic cities. Tens of buildings date back to the city's earliest colonial days in the mid 17th century, and hundreds of others originate in the early 19th century.

Modern-day Charleston is relatively low-rise, bereft of skyscrapers or any large-scale, glass and steel business district. There are lots of chic boutiques and galleries, often with historic-looking facades and many visitors come here to step back in time with a romantic vision of the deep south. There's ample wrought ironwork, palmetto palms, elegant mansions, and mint juleps to be enjoyed on a picturesque porch. A scenic harbor, aromas of night-blooming jasmine, and bistros selling local delicacy she-crab soup all add to the charm.

An increase in tourism has also sparked a rise in hotel development. Most recently, the total for the metro area was around 18,000 total hotel rooms, which is significant for a small city such as Charleston.

I've been visiting Charleston for over a decade to edit and update guidebooks and have personally visited and stayed in every hotel on this list. These hotels offer the best value and most memorable hospitality experiences in the city.

In addition to an impressive range of historic properties with preserved features, there also new, contemporary builds to consider. Most of the best hotels in Charleston are located in and around the downtown historic district.

The city is host to some large-scale events that raise accommodation prices across the board, and Charleston is a relatively expensive destination in general, however entry-level rooms at four-star properties can be found between \$199 and \$349 per night. All choices on this list are based on my own experience reviewing each property, are centrally located with desirable amenities, and incorporate feedback from ratings found on trusted traveler sites such as [Trip Advisor](#) and [Booking.com](#).

These are the best Charleston hotels, sorted by price from low to high.

The Vendue Charleston's Art Hotel



A collection of 18th-century, red-brick warehouses were converted into the two buildings that make up this dynamic, combined boutique hotel and art space.

Large abstract paintings and sculptures loom over the bright lobby with its marble floor and modernist teal furniture, which gives way to a large gallery space with reclaimed wooden floors, and some 300 pieces of art comparable to any local museum.

The 84 rooms are evenly split between the two buildings, with many layout variations due to the vagaries of the historic building. However, all boast tastefully-curated period and reproduction furniture, and original artwork adorns evocative exposed brick walls.

Flagship restaurant, The Drawing Room, is a much-loved local eatery with a tempting new American menu. The rooftop bar is always abuzz and has some of the best views of the Cooper River in town. The hotel also offers free bikes for local exploration

Trip Advisor Ranking: 25 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 8.9 out of 10

Pros: The Vendue Charleston's Art Hotel is an excellent boutique hotel with its own art gallery, making it a truly unusual but unique local property.

Cons: Some of the entry-level rooms do not have windows, which make them feel quite small.

The Beach Club at Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina



Located across the water from downtown Charleston and looking back over its skyline, this upscale resort brings much-welcomed coastal appeal to the city's hotel portfolio.

A grove of palmetto trees leads up to the property, which basks in maritime-themed luxury. The mahogany-floored lobby sets a ship-shape standard that is maintained throughout the property with white wood accents and a strong boating aesthetic. All but eight of the 92 rooms face the harbor, most with private balconies that are a real boon come sunset. The interiors reflect a high-end seaside cottage, with periwinkle and sea-grass color schemes and polished marble bathrooms.

Enjoy an evening cocktail on the spectacular poolside veranda, which spans the length of the hotel with classy blue and white sofas where guests recline with drinks from the Tiki Bar. There's also a quiet adults-only pool and a hot tub, as well as the large family pool. A spa and small movie theater complete the main amenities. Seafood stars at the hotel's Charleston Harbor Fish House, while drinks can be had at its sister bar, the Topsail Lounge. Free water taxis and shuttles connect guests to downtown Charleston.

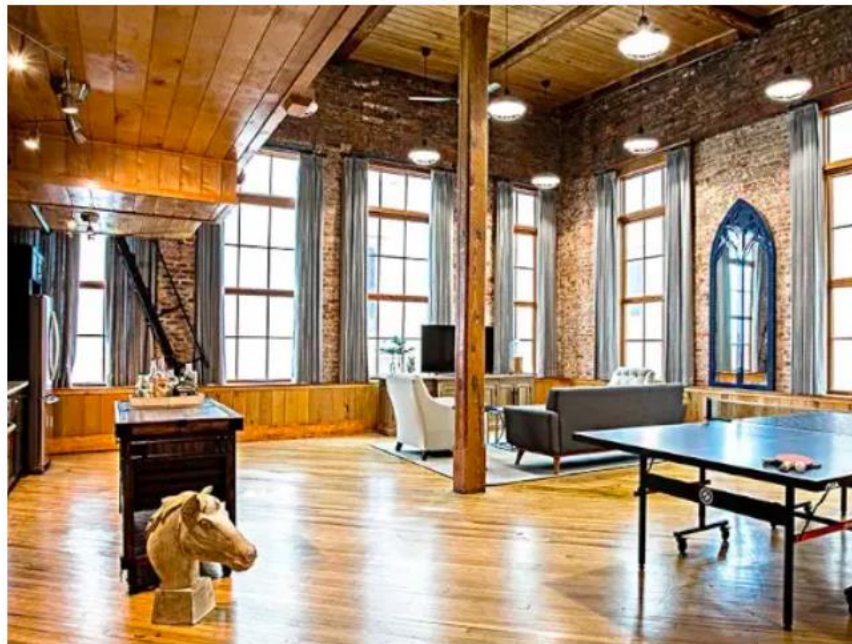
Trip Advisor Ranking: 9 out of 30 hotels in Mount Pleasant (across the harbor from downtown Charleston)

Booking.com Rating: 9.2 out of 10

Pros: Tastefully set across the harbor from downtown Charleston for elevated levels of tranquility and exclusivity, with resort perks like multiple pools, a spa, and a movie theater.

Cons: The harbor location might seem idyllic at first, but quickly feel inconvenient for nightlife and downtown dining, which are accessible only via water taxi or a relatively long drive.

The Restoration



In many ways, The Restoration is emblematic of the kind of hotel that best represents the 'New South,' with a look that is design-forward and unmistakably modern but sincerely honors its heritage.

The hotel is built across a collection of superficially disconnected historic buildings but bridges them in a thoughtful, convenient way. Contemporary and period design flourishes are matched creatively with exposed original brickwork and reclaimed wooden beams.

The hotel has a plum central location, and 54 suites overlook King Street and its environs. It's the only hotel that offers kitchenettes with granite work surfaces and high-end additions such as a coffee bean grinder. There's upscale liquor and ice cream to be consumed, and the indigo blue motif of public spaces carries throughout the hotel. Wooden floors and luxury linens enhance the spacious, chic living and sleeping areas.

The rooftop pool and terrace are both tranquil escapes, as is the hotel's Amethyst Spa with its organic body scrubs. Complimentary bikes and a happy hour with free wine are both welcome perks. The Watch Rooftop Kitchen & Bar attracts as many locals as it does guests, while coffee shop The Rise, and the hotel's library room (complete with ping pong table), are relaxing venues.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 18 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 8.9 out of 10

Pros: The Restoration is a rare all-suite hotel with a prime location in the heart of Charleston's historic district. The free wine and cheese happy hour each evening is a welcome perk.

Cons: Booking availability can be difficult.

Planters Inn



The corner of Market Street and Meeting Street is one of the city's busiest tourist spots, and Planters Inn is a necessary respite. Located in a converted building dating back to 1844, the hotel is Charleston's only esteemed Relais and Chateaux luxury property.

The exterior is misleadingly modern, but dipping into the lobby, guests are immediately welcomed by Victorian portraits, period fireplaces, and antique rugs.

Four-poster beds and reproductions of wooden furniture await in guest rooms in the main building, which are custom-made by Baker Furniture Company's Historic Charleston Collection. Luxuriously thick drapes, neutral pastel tones, and the hotel's mascot, a thread worn teddy bear, appear in each room. For a more contemporary aesthetic, upgrade to rooms in the attached Piazza Building. All guests are treated to nightly turndown macarons.

Those vintage portraits, as well as studies of horses and bucolic scenes, also adorn the hotel restaurant, The Peninsula Grill, which is famed for its decadent coconut cake. Beyond an atmospheric courtyard, the hotel is otherwise bereft of amenities, focused instead on the undeniably comfortable accommodations.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 9 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.3 out of 10

Pros: Planters Inn is home to Peninsula Grill, one of the city's best restaurants, and rooms are quite plush.

Cons: The hotel does not offer a fitness center or a pool, despite the mid-tier price tag.

The Dewberry



Another 're-imagination' of southern hospitality, this time with striking midcentury modern flair, these marble and brick former government offices were transformed into a distinctly stylish retreat.

The renovation took eight years, with owner John Dewberry actively bucking the trend to contrast the hotel with the contemporary/Antebellum flavors of its peers. Here, tasteful, abstract art from local artists mixes with hand-crafted furniture and light fittings, and every piece was painstakingly collected and combined into a coherent design statement.

The results add a notably residential feel to guest rooms, with light pouring through floor-to-ceiling windows, alongside various shades of wood grain and warm brass accents, and views of the city and harbor.

On-site, there is a fitness room, plus the Dewberry Spa, with cypress-paneled treatment rooms. Leisure time is also well spent with complimentary bicycle rentals or cocktails in the commodious Living Room. There's also the full-service restaurant, Henrietta's, which features lovely, dark-wood booths bathed in light for most of the day.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 13 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.3 out of 10

Pros: The Dewberry is a very satisfying stay for guests who value design and aesthetic flourishes.

Cons: Rooms do not have coffee machines and the in-room dining menu is somewhat limited.

Hotel Bennett



Hotel Bennett is a grand recent arrival to the city's hotel scene that appears outwardly European but skews southern inside. The architectural style is Palladian, with some Venetian symmetry visible in large arched windows. The interior is more elaborate, with regal staircases and murals around the rotunda that serve as the height of Antebellum sophistication.

Elements of the building's former life as the city library are apparent in the rooms, with small bookshelves peppered among the otherwise modern but traditional decor. Think light blue and cream overtones, floral-patterned carpets, and comfortably large oval bathtubs that epitomize a sense of elegant languor. A high-tech lighting system hands over control of the ambiance to guests.

Four dining and nightlife options are available at the hotel. High-end New Orleanian cuisine is served at flagship restaurant Gabrielle, which has a standout romantic plaza for outside dining. Fiat Lux offers a Mediterranean menu with rooftop views, and champagne bar Camellia's is a pink-hued delight. Finally, La Patisserie is a cute bakery with pastries and coffees.

A small spa and fitness room are worth visiting, as is the ninth floor roof terrace with its welcoming heated pool and day cabanas.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 11 of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.5 out of 10

Pros: Hotel Bennett is one of the larger, full-service hotels in the city, with lots of amenities and dining options, including a roof terrace and heated pool.

Cons: Although the hotel welcomes dogs in theory, the pet policy is somewhat vague about the size.

Zero George Street



The three properties that make up this boutique hotel date back to 1804 and sit in a lovely residential neighborhood close to Gadsdenboro Park. Although modern in design, the 16 rooms and public areas incorporate timeless Lowcountry features such as shady piazzas, airy high ceilings, and polished heart of pine floors.

The hotel also oozes intimacy and romance, with an evocative reception area and carriage house kitchen, as well as a dining room and cozy bar aglow with candlelight.

As with most historic properties, the rooms differ in size and layout thanks to the respect paid to the original building. Though, they all come with period features including fireplaces, tall ceilings, and those alluring wooden floors.

For dining, Chef Vinson Petrillo's on-site demonstration kitchen is the heart of the hotel in many ways, and his tasting menu is a treat guests should lean into. When the weather permits, eat outside in the courtyard on fresh-baked breakfast biscuits or delectable seafood; dining here is sure to become a sensuous memory.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 5 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.4 out of 10

Pros: Genuinely memorable dining experiences on-site, and a location close to the downtown culinary scene.

Cons: Zero Garage Street offers relatively few amenities. For example, guests have to check into a nearby health club for the use of a gym, and only 16 rooms means bookings can fill up quickly.

The Spectator Hotel



The roaring twenties is an era less generally explored by hotel interior designers, but that time period's inherent glamour and bonhomie are evoked to no little effect at The Spectator, one of the city's newer properties.

The lobby-adjacent living room doubles as the hotel bar with low-lit dark wood bookcases, leather sofas, and dark green accents. There's a vague, Art Deco undercurrent too, thanks to contemporary artwork additions from a local collective.

The guest rooms have a similar feel. I like the teal velvet trimmings on the bed and headboards that give off a strong vintage flavor, all backed by retro light fittings and marble bathrooms with double vanities and walk-in rain showers.

Food and beverage offerings are limited aside from a somewhat elevated continental breakfast with local pastries. Otherwise, the bar is only set up for (albeit very tasty) craft cocktails. Luckily, the dining options of Market Street and beyond are right outside the doorstep.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 3 of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.5 out of 10

Pros: The Spectator Hotel is the only hotel in the city to offer personalized butler service, and the design is truly remarkable.

Cons: The limited dining options on-site may be disappointing, though many local choices are within easy walking distance.

Belmond Charleston Place



This hotel, constructed in 1986, is commonly believed to have kickstarted Charleston's hospitality revival. The brickwork facade is relatively modern in looks, but the interior goes full tilt towards an homage to old Charleston opulence, most obviously in the sweeping twin staircases, chandeliers, and decorous floral displays.

Even entry-level Deluxe Rooms are sizeable and handsome, showcasing a traditional, high-end style with plush paisley-patterned fabrics, heavy curtains, and sturdy, dark wood-framed beds. The bathrooms have a striking herringbone motif and modern rain showers. There's also a Club Level for VIP guests for complimentary beer, wine, and snacks.

The hotel's Charleston Place Spa is one of the most upmarket in town and offers exotic body wraps and private yoga classes. There's also a small gym and bijoux saltwater relaxation pool.

For dining, the hotel's Charleston Grill set culinary standards in town long before the recent arrival of a new wave of world-class eateries. It also offers live jazz, though it serves dinner only. Breakfast and lunch are both available across the courtyard at Palmetto Café.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 14 of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 9.3 out of 10

Pros: Belmond Charleston Place is one of the most upscale hotels in the region, and pays true homage to southern hospitality and tradition.

Cons: Prices can rise very high during peak seasons and festivals.

Wentworth Mansion



From the exterior alone — an unusual example of the Second Empire's eclectic mix of architectural styles — it's clear that Wentworth Mansion is one of the city's grandest buildings. Inside, the hotel is a monument to stately elegance with original Italian crystal chandeliers and Tiffany glass doors.

The lobby and library are picture-perfect examples of relaxed sophistication with dark green leather-backed armchairs, decanters of port and brandy, and period bookcases. The most popular public space, though, is the 360-degree cupola, where cocktails can be clinked as the sun sets over the city skyline.

The rooms (of which there are just 21) are immediately striking with 14-foot ceilings, marble fireplaces, and Victorian furniture. Other lovely additions include window seats and window shutters, walk-in marble showers, and whirlpool baths with artisanal bath salts.

The Wentworth Spa is suitably luxurious, but true indulgence is found at the award-winning restaurant, Circa 1866, in a former carriage house. Chef Marc Collins has been there since its inception almost 20 years ago, serving an immaculate seasonal menu complemented by a 300+ bottle wine cellar. It's a relatively expensive choice, but worth the investment.

Trip Advisor Ranking: 2 out of 66 hotels in Charleston

Booking.com Rating: 8.8 out of 10

Pros: Wentworth Mansion is probably the most upscale hotel in the city, with outstanding interior design, period furniture, and excellent on-site restaurant.

Cons: An upscale reputation can often mean expensive prices. The hotel welcomes dogs, which is a huge plus if you wish to bring one, but some guests have complained about the accompanying noise.