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Newsletter
August 2017

A member recently told me that there is a “national day” celebrating something every single day. Upon researching this, it is true. Some of the notable “national days” in August are, “National Ice Cream Sandwich Day” on August 2nd, not to be outdone, personally August 4th is my favorite, “National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day.” Don’t go “commando” on August 5th, it is “National Underwear Day.” Other very important days: “Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor’s Porch Day” (8th), “Lazy Day” (10th), “Senior Citizens Day” (21st), “Be an Angel Day” (22nd), “Kiss and Make Up Day” (25th), “National Dog Day” (26th), and “More Herbs, Less Salt Day” (29th). August is the “Admit You’re Happy Month.”

Our trip to DC and Alexandria is coming together nicely from August 24th (“Vesuvius Day”) to August 28th (“Race Your Mouse Day”). We stay in the recently renovated 5-star hotel, **The Watergate**, and dine in Washington’s top restaurants. I have already booked many Zagat and TripAdvisor top 10 restaurants in town and we will be touring all over the city. There is also 1 Michelin Star Restaurant. There is still space if you want to join.

I am putting together a great trip to Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah. Our trip will be the week of October 9th for 8 days and 7 nights. Beaufort is 70 miles from Charleston on the way to Savannah. We are flying into Charleston where we will stay for 4 nights, then on our way to Savannah (for 3 nights) we head for a daytrip to Beaufort, one of the South’s oldest and most historic towns. Please hold the dates and RSVP so I have an accurate headcount.

This coming weekend, Saturday July 15th, we have a brunch in the East Village at the amazing **VIRGINIA’S**. We dined here in January and it was a success, therefore, when Reed the owner asked us to come again for a brunch, I jumped at the idea. This Sunday, July 16th, we dine at one of our favorite French restaurants, **BISTRO VENDOME**. The following weekend, **Saturday, July 22nd**, we are excited to dine at a very highly rated steakhouse in Manhattan, **NY YANKEES STEAKHOUSE**. Located in the heart of Midtown, the NY Yankees Steakhouse is a destination for fans and gourmands alike. Since 2013, executive Chef John Schafer leads the kitchen known for its high-quality specialty steaks. On July 23rd join us for a **SUNSET BOAT TOUR** on the first yacht of the Classic Harbor Line Fleet: **Schooner Adirondack!** Join us for drinks and views on this 80-foot beauty. This boat only holds 90 people. 3 drinks are included and there is no food. NOTE: It is an **open-air sailboat ride**. Sunday, July 30th join us at **BOTTINO** in the heart of Chelsea as we dine at one of the top restaurants in this hip neighborhood.

Our August starts off on Sunday, August 6th with a knowledge filled **AIANY Architecture Boat Tour**. We did this last year around the entire island of NYC. This year we decided to do the boat tour through lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. Architect teachers give a full narration on the history of the NYC skyline on a scenic tour. On Saturday, August 12th, join us at Chef Richard Sandoval’s hot spot, **PAMPANO**. That Wednesday, August 16th, join us for a new restaurant for the group, the 43-year old **VILLA MASCONI**. After meeting the “straight out of the Soprano’s” restaurant manager, I knew it would be a great fit for our group. A half a dozen members over the years, have mentioned dining here or at **Montes**, their sister restaurant. The following weekend we start off Saturday, August 19th with a popular wine tasting class “French Favorites” at **LE GRAND TRIAGE**. This class combines both French wine and cheese. Then Sunday, August 20th, we dine at a long-standing French bistro right in the heart of the Upper West Side **LA BOITE EN BOIS**. They have been serving up French cuisine for 30 years and is a favorite amongst many of the locals in the area. There is no seated bar area, so we are meeting a few blocks away at Atlantic Grill for drinks, then walking over. This truly is a very quaint French bistro that lives up to its name-“the wooden box”. That Saturday, August 26th we return to an absolute gem and 2 members just recommended we dine here, **Piccolo Fiore**. I had one of my personal best meals ever with the group here, and this August we head back for another 4-course encore right in the heart of midtown.

The following July events are still available for Single Gourmet Members and their guests:

Virginia's Brunch- 647 East 11th (Between Ave B and C), Saturday, July 15th 12:00pm optional drinks, 12:30pm brunch- 3-course brunch, glass of wine/bloody Mary, tax / tip. \$59
Bistro Vendôme- 405 East 58th Street, July 16th 5:30pm drinks, 6:15pm dinner 3-course, glass wine, coffee, tax, tip \$72
NY Yankees Steakhouse- 7 West 51st St, Saturday, July 22nd, 6:30pm opt drink, 7:30pm \$89
Sunset Sail Schooner Adirondack- Chelsea Pier @22nd Sunday, July 23rd Meet @ 6:15pm, \$71
Bottino Ristorante, 246 10th Avenue (24th St) Sunday, July 30th, 5:45pm drinks, 6:30pm dinner \$79

The following August events are available for Single Gourmet Members and their guests:



**AIANY Architecture Tour and 1920's Yacht Cruise
Boat Ride Around LOWER Manhattan
Pier 62- Chelsea @ West 22nd and Hudson River
Sunday, August 6th meet at "Wichcraft Sandwiches"
5:00pm at the pier (launch @ 5:15pm) 90 minutes
\$52- tour, 1 glass wine/beer/champagne, soda.
RSVP Early and Non-refundable**

We did this architecture boat tour around the entire island last year with great success. Join us on this 'abridged' version. This 1.5-hour cruise covers major sites from all eras visible along the Lower Manhattan (below 59th) and Brooklyn waterfronts. Tour features include the Brooklyn Bridge, Governors Island's new park, and recent work by noted local and international "starchitect", landscape architects and engineers. Relax aboard the swanky 1920s-style yacht Manhattan. Our guides are members of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), who designed this tour to spotlight some of Manhattan's most noted structures and exterior styles. Continuous narration covers architecture and engineering landmarks from all eras as well as current urban planning and environmental issues impacting urban waterfronts. Discussions include the planning visions for both reclaiming the post-industrial waterfront, as the "6th Borough," and addressing rising sea levels. A focus on the adaptation of the High Line and its role in the development of West Chelsea and the story of post WWII urban renewal and public housing along the Lower East Side.



**Pampano- Richard Sandoval
209 East 49th (2nd and 3rd Ave)
Saturday, August 12th
7:00 pm optional drinks, 7:45 pm dinner
\$80 3-course, gl wine/margarita, coffee, t&t**

A Richard Sandoval masterpiece! **Zagat** 4.4 where the food "hits the high notes" Chef Sandoval, a Bravo's top Chef Master, is known for taking gourmet Mexican and Latin flavor to a new level. Zagat says, "Refined Mexican dishes highlighting excellent seafood are the stars at this classy East Midtowner." With over 30 Latin restaurants across the United States, Europe, Mexico and the Middle East, Richard Sandoval is a global pioneer. Nine of his restaurants have been voted best in their category. He was nominated for James Beard Outstanding Restaurateur. Over 4 stars on all review sites, and **Michelin Guide** 2017 states, "Nothing screams you need a trip to Acapulco like a stressful day in midtown, and we've got your remedy: Pampano, a popular Mexican seafood restaurant, offers two types of oases for the weary worker: downstairs, you'll find a lively bar with a few small tables to enjoy their botanas menu; upstairs, you'll find a transporting, beachy dining space with whitewashed ceilings, wicker chairs, lazy ceiling fans, and an outdoor patio." We dine here often with groups of over 30 each time. **One of the best!**



Villa Mosconi

69 MacDougal Street (2 blocks from West 4th station)
(1 block North of Houston, 1 block East of 6th avenue)

Wednesday, August 16th

5:45pm optional drinks, 6:30pm dinner

\$79- 4-course dinner, glass of wine, tax and tip

New York Magazine says, "If you're tired of Italian restaurants trying to out-Molto each other, this old-school spot is your salvation. Run by the seven Mosconi siblings since 1976, the Northern Italian menu is particularly influenced by the family's roots in Emilia-Romagna." Zagat says, "Grandma would be proud of the real-deal Italian eats at this old-school Villager, where a delightful staff has been slinging smack-your-lips-good classics since 1976." Award winning chef Pietro Mosconi was born in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy in a small village in the province of Piacenza. In 1976, Pietro with his siblings opened Villa Mosconi and with its success they purchased the old-time favorite Monte's Trattoria. Pietro participates in mentoring young chefs through apprentice programs and was named the Employer of the Year by the Summit School. He also serves as a member of several culinary organizations including the Chaine de Rotisseurs and Les Amis D'Escoffier Society of New York. In 2007, Pietro was honored at the James Beard house. Pietro was the recipient of Chef of the Year in 2005 from the Chefs de Cuisine Association of America and was elected President of the organization in 2010. Our 4-course meal starts off with a shared antipasti course, a pasta course, a choice of entrees and dessert. Please NOTE: Pre-dinner drinks and extra drinks are **CASH BAR ONLY!!!**



Le Grand Triage- French Favorites (wine/cheese)

1657 First Avenue (86th/87th)

Saturday, August 19th- RSVP EARLY

7:30 SHARP- 917-475-1212 (store number)

\$55- wine and cheese pairing

At Le Grand Triage, they are all about wine education. Join us for a taste-gasm of stellar wine and cheese pairings that will give you a greater appreciation for how these two delicacies go together. The owner and sommelier, Eric Rydin, will guide you through six separate wine and cheese pairings that will make your mouth water. This **5 stars**

on YELP event will leave you way more knowledgeable and tipsy than before you join. France is the most famous winemaking country in the world, so what better way to pay homage to its incredible viticultural tradition than by tasting a selection of wines from this region? From digital maps and detailed images, follow our resident sommelier through rivers, lakes, and hills to taste 6 favorites that demonstrate the difference between the regions, appellations, and winemaking laws that comprise the French tradition. Includes an antipasti plate w/cheese, crackers & charcuterie.



La Boite En Bois- 75 West 68th Street

Drinks Atlantic Grill- 49 West 64th

Or meet at the restaurant at 6:30pm

Sunday, August 20th

\$67 3-courses, NO wine, tax and tip

\$75 with wine- please let me know

For over 30 years, this family owned and operated French bistro has been serving the Upper West Side with classic French dishes. Zagat rated, La Boite en Bois is a quaint and romantic French restaurant. Just off of Columbus Avenue, it is tucked away in a beautiful brownstone. With its rustic ambience, you will feel as though you are in the countryside of

France. La Boite en Bois certainly lives up to its name, which implies cozy rusticity. The menu includes, smoked salmon and smoked trout with a cucumber dill salad, roasted salmon with couscous and spinach, homemade pasta of the day, chicken with mushroom sauce, beef bourguignon, ending with a medley of French desserts. **Due to lack of bar seating, we are meeting at Atlantic Grill** 4 short blocks away for drinks, then we walk over to the restaurant.



Piccolo Fiore- Saturday, August 26th
230 East 44th Street @2nd/3rd
7:00pm Optional pre-dinner drinks, 7:45 Dinner
\$88- 4-course dinner, glass of wine, coffee, tax & tip

Zagat rated and close to Grand Central, Piccolo Fiore is dedicated to providing an unparalleled culinary experience by serving the finest local, hand-crafted Italian fare by a passionate team driven by their love of food. Tiziano Maiella is the general manager with past restaurant experience in Switzerland, England and Italy and is originally from Abruzzo where he learned the art of making wine and olive oil from his family farm. Our 4-course meal starts with an antipasti course of burrata, mozzarella, roasted peppers, vine ripe tomatoes and basil with baby spinach, goat cheese and balsamic vinaigrette. Then we have a multi-pasta course of gnocchi with mozzarella pesto and rigatoni with roasted eggplant, tomato-basil. Our entrees include grilled swordfish; chicken with prosciutto, sage, fontina cheese and port wine; slow roasted veal with mushroom sauce; ribeye steak or eggplant rotolini with spinach, tomatoes, and mozzarella. Our desserts are chocolate cake or tiramisu. Please note that **Juliane will be running this dinner.**

To reserve at any or all the events please go to our website or call us at (646-825-0268), email us at aaron@thesingelgourmet.net or mail checks to: The Single Gourmet, c/o Aaron Lefkowitz, 69 west 9th Street Apt #6A, New York, NY 10011.

PLEASE NOTE: Our Cancellation Policy- If you cancel within 72 hours of a meal event there are no refunds. Restaurants **MUST** plan in advance for large events and I guarantee a headcount based on YOUR RSVP. I am held to that guarantee and often pay a deposit or the full amount in advance. Ticketed events (tours, shows, ANY non-dinner event) are non-refundable within 7 days before the event.

Also note: **ALL menus listed are subject to change without notice due to restaurant supply.**

1.	Virginia's Brunch	Sat, July 15 th	12:00 pm	\$59 _____
2.	Bistro Vendome- Bastille Day Weekend French	Sun, July 16 th	5:30 pm	\$72 _____
3.	NY YANKEES STEAKHOUSE	Sat, July 22 nd	6:30 pm	\$89 _____
4.	Sunset Sail Boat Ride	Sun, July 23 rd	6:30 pm	\$71 _____
5.	Bottino- West Chelsea Gem	Sun, July 30 th	5:45 pm	\$79 _____
6.	ALANY Architecture Boat Ride	Sun, Aug 6 th	5:00 pm	\$52 _____
7.	POMPANO- Richard Sandoval	Sat, Aug 12 th	7:00 pm	\$80 _____
8.	Villa Mosconi- 4-Course Old School Italian	Wed, Aug 16 th	5:45 pm	\$79 _____
9.	Le Grand Triage- French Wine and Cheese	Sat, Aug 19 th	7:30 pm	\$55 _____
10.	La Boite En Bois-French (meet at Atlantic Grill)	Sun, Aug 20 th	5:45 pm	\$67 or \$75 _____
11.	Piccolo Fiore- 4- Course Fine Italian	Sat, Aug 26 th	7:00pm	\$88 _____
12.	Washington, Alexandria Virginia	August 24 th to 28 th	Due in Full	\$2395 _____
13.	Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah	Oct 9-16 th	Deposit	\$500 deposit

Washington & Old Town Alexandria Virginia

Thursday, August 24th to Monday, August 28th

Subtract \$100 if meeting us there, \$225 if sharing a room

4 nights and 5 days. \$2395 includes Amtrak, **5-star hotel**, 9 meals, tours, and tips

Temperatures currently predicted 65-85 we will have a bus the entire time and our 1 walking tour (10 blocks) is 10am.

Recently opened after 9-year renovation- The Watergate Hotel a **5-Star** hotel in Washington DC- One of the top hotels on Trip Advisor. Set along the banks of the Potomac River, the Watergate Hotel is a luxurious urban resort with mid-century modern architecture. Following an extensive **\$200 million renovation** the hotel offers a choice location within a historically significant structure, steeped in services. The renovated guest rooms and suites have artful, mid-century modern styling with sleek wood furnishings, large windows, work desks, 48-inch flat-screen TVs, and Nespresso coffee makers. The spa-inspired marble bathrooms have custom La Bottega amenities. All tours included, Amtrak to DC, Michelin Star Restaurant, Multiple top 10 restaurants in town, #2,#3,#6,#7,#10 top restaurants on TripAdvisor in DC and Alexandria!!!

Thursday morning Amtrak into DC gets us into town in time to check in and eat lunch at one of **the best** restaurants in the country. After lunch, we will have a 3 hour bus trip around DC covering various sites of the city. We then head back to the hotel to rest before dinner at another top restaurant.

I have hired **DC Military Guide Company**- Washington's only veteran owned and operated military historical tour company where we can get behind the scenes access to historic sites with a veteran guide.

Friday- we will visit the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**, then eat lunch at a top restaurant, and after lunch tour more sites. Some places on our itinerary are The U.S. Capitol Building, the World War II Memorial, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, the FDR Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the National Archives Building.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum- Chartered by a unanimous Act of Congress in 1980, the USHMM's collections contain more than 12,750 artifacts, 49 million pages of archival documents, 80,000 historical photographs, 200,000 registered survivors, 1,000 hours of archival footage, 84,000 library items, and 9,000 oral history testimonies. Spanning three floors, our self-guided tour, offers a chronological narrative of the Holocaust through historical artifacts, photographs, and film footage. Throughout the exhibition, we will also encounter personal objects and the eyewitness testimonies of individual survivors. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust. The Museum's primary mission is to advance knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust.

Old Town Alexandria is nationally recognized for its rich history and preserved 18th and 19th century architecture. Alexandria is a beautiful small town of cobblestone streets on the waterfront, an extraordinary backdrop for acclaimed, chef-driven restaurants; a thriving boutique scene; vibrant arts and culture; and a welcoming, walkable lifestyle. Founded in 1749 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, experience history where it happened, while enjoying one-of-a-kind boutique shopping, award-winning dining, and diverse cultural activities and art. Explore charming Old Town Alexandria with a local historian as we stroll by 18th- and 19th-century houses immersing ourselves in the history of the city both George Washington and Robert E. Lee called home. In the morning, we will have guide show us about 10 city blocks (in an hour+) covering the history of Market Square, Gadsby's Tavern, The Carlyle House, George Washington's townhouse and end at Christ Church cemetery. After lunch, we also take a 40-minute narrated boat tour past historic landmarks such as Old Town Alexandria, Founders Park, Old Town Yacht Basin, Admiral's Row, Jones Point Lighthouse and more! We will also visit **The Torpedo Factor Art Center**- home to 150+ working artists and 6 galleries. Founded in 1974, the Torpedo Factory Art Center is home to the nation's largest collection of working-artists under one roof. An Alexandria landmark attracting approximately 500,000 visitors annually.

Sunday, we head out for tours of Mount Vernon and Arlington National Cemetery.

Food tour of Georgetown- Washington D.C.'s Georgetown neighborhood is home to some of the city's most notable residents, local commerce, embassies, and of course, culinary gems. On this tour, we will eat our way through this well-known and prestigious neighborhood. We will learn about Georgetown's early iconic years as we stroll off-the-beaten path for a taste from various local eateries. Georgetown's shady lanes and cobblestone streets reflect another side of the Capital. Our Historic Georgetown tour focuses on the houses and sites of a town that still invokes the image of refinement and class after 300 years. Walking a total of about 1 mile.

Fiola- MICHELN STAR 2016 Zagat 4.8 (4.7 décor and service)-This “beautiful flagship of chef Fabio Trabocchi's growing empire (Casa Luca, Fiola Mare) offers elegance and sophistication in a modern Penn Quarter setting, matched with sumptuous Italian cuisine that delivers flavor in every bite; service is so impeccable that any meal here is a special occasion, and though the experience is decidedly not cheap, it's certainly worth what you pay”- Zagat **TripAdvisor #3 of 2579 restaurants.**

Zaytinya- Zagat Incredible 4.7 Featuring “exceptional, small plates, José Andrés' one-of-a-kind Penn Quarter Med hot spot is a go-to choice for everything from dining with out-of-towners to impressing a first date; its light, airy space and sunny service supply the warm backdrop for its magic mix of traditional and inventive meze.” Under the direction of celebrated chef José Andrés and his ThinkFoodGroup team, Zaytinya offers an innovative mezze menu making Zaytinya one of the most exciting restaurants in Washington. Since opening in 2002, Zaytinya is listed in Eaters as 1 of the '38 Essential DC Restaurants'- Spring 2107. **TripAdvisor #10 of 2579**

Rasika- Zagat whopping 4.8- “These phenomenal Indian destinations take a centuries-old cuisine to a whole new level with innovative interpretations like crispy spinach unlike anything you've ever had served in beautiful, modern settings that rank among DC's swankiest; friendly, unobtrusive servers put novices at ease, one must plan ahead for prime-time reservations.” President Obama celebrated his 52nd birthday here. Showcasing Tawa (Griddle), Sigri (open Barbeque), Tandoori and regional dishes. Rasika's Vikram Sunderam was awarded the 2014 **James Beard Award** for best chef in the Mid-Atlantic region. Rasika is listed in the Top 25 Best Fine Dining Restaurants on Trip Advisor in the United States, **Rasika has been named among the top 20 restaurants across America in Zagat's America's Top Restaurants Survey** and is listed in Eaters as 1 of the '38 Essential DC Restaurants'- Spring 2107. **TripAdvisor #7 of 2579**

Joe's Seafood Prime Steak & Stone Crab- The legendary Joe's Stone Crab first opened in Miami Beach in 1913. It all began when Joseph Weiss and his wife set up tables on the front porch of their house. 100 years later, Joe's has become one of the most beloved and widely recognized restaurants in the world. [This restaurant is subject to change.](#) **TripAdvisor #6 of 2579**

Kingbird- Too soon for a Zagat rating, but they say, “the centerpiece of the storied Watergate Hotel's renovation, this French-inspired modern American features both a more casual eatery and a fine-dining affair offering seasonal tasting menus and tableside preparations of complex classics. Curved lipstick-red banquettes divide the dramatic space, boasting Potomac riverfront views, sloped-seat chairs, towering stainless-steel columns and sculptural light fixtures.” The manager John Gilbert, previously at Fiola Mare, and executive chef Michael Santoro previously of Michelin Star Blue Duck Tavern head this restaurant. [This restaurant subject to change.](#)

Brabo- Dinner in Alexandria- **Zagat 4.6-** “To-die-for French-Belgian fare is paired with a great wine list at this refined, white-tablecloth venue in Alexandria's Old Town; given the pleasant service and modern decor, fans feel it's like being at a friend's lavish home”. **TripAdvisor #2 Fine Dining Restaurant in Alexandria.**

Gadsby's Tavern- Lunch in Alexandria- Gadsby's Tavern has been offering fine dining since 1770. The site known as Gadsby's Tavern consists of two buildings, a (circa) 1785 tavern & the 1792 City Hotel. Named after Englishman John Gadsby, an entrepreneur who leased the buildings & operated them as tavern keeper from 1796-1808, the tavern & hotel were the center of Alexandria's economic, political, & social life in the late-18th and early-19th centuries. Notable tavern visitors include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison & James Monroe. **TripAdvisor #6 of 605 restaurants in Alexandria.**

CHARLESTON - BEAUFORT – SAVANNAH- October 9-16

\$4295 (-\$225 if flying on own, -\$475 pp if sharing a room)

This trip is still in planning stages. As of now, we will be staying 4 nights in Charleston and 3 nights in Savannah. The first night in Charleston is an open night to explore the city on your own, however there might be an optional walking tour in the late afternoon (depending on when we land.) Temperatures in the low 60s to low 80s. The restaurants will be top restaurants in town and we will have fun activities and tours.

HOTELS- We are *currently* holding rooms at the recently built **Hyatt House** in downtown Charleston. Ranked #14 best hotel in Charleston. Located in “The Upper King Street district” which has emerged as an area with tremendous energy; showcasing culinary innovation, experimental design and boutique shopping. Charleston's Upper King Street historic neighborhood was recently named one of the top 10 food neighborhoods in America. Every gets a king bed room with upgrades to studio suites (490sf \$+75) and 1 bedroom suites (540sf, +\$150), each suite includes an additional sofa bed and fully equipped kitchen with center island. If sharing a room, you would get a 1 bedroom king suite with a pull-out double couch in the living room or 2 double bed room, depending on availability. Rated Superb on Hotel.com 4.6/5. In Savannah, the centrally located hotel is TBD.

Charleston- For the very **first time ever**, readers of Travel + Leisure have voted Charleston the **No. 1 City in the World** beating out every major travel destination, even Florence and Barcelona! Charleston is the first US city to earn the coveted No. 1 City in the World ranking (4 consecutive times it was voted best city in the US and Canada.) The city has managed to preserve all the qualities for which it widely known—a prime coastal setting, historic architecture, friendly locals—while nurturing a creative culture that is making it one of the most notable destinations for those who seek out interesting restaurants. With Charleston's rich history, impeccably landscaped gardens, and stunning waterfront views, it's no wonder travelers ranked the city so highly. The South Carolina port city founded in 1670, is defined by its cobblestone streets, horse-drawn carriages and pastel antebellum houses. In addition to historic battlegrounds and jasmine-scented streets, Charleston is home to award-winning restaurants, pre-civil war charm, excellent boutiques, beautiful waterfront making this city the most beloved in the world. **Southern Living Magazine** ranking Charleston # 1 City in the South saying the city has “made Southern cuisine not only a serious subject, but a globally renowned experience.”

Beaufort

Southern Living Magazine's rankings of the best small town is led by Beaufort, S.C. The magazine says Beaufort “offers up terrific scenery and while it “isn't Savannah or Charleston, it does get close in flavor and geography.” Known as the “Queen of the Carolina Sea Islands, Beaufort is city of lordly and striking mansions of pre-Revolutionary and pre-Civil War eras. Step back in time to recapture a history dating as far back as the 1500s. Blending warm southern hospitality with its interesting chronology, the magic of Beaufort can be felt through the breeze in the Palmetto fronds, can be heard in the hum of passing boats along the Intracoastal Waterway, and can be seen in the classic architecture of regal antebellum homes.” Beaufort is known for movies such as “The Big Chill,” “The Great Santini,” “Prince of Tides,” and “Forrest Gump.”

Savannah, Southern Living magazine recently announced the winners of its first “South's Best” awards with Savannah being named the second-best city in the South (Charleston took home the top spot, of course). According to Southern Living, Savannah ranked highly because “like a time capsule of historic architecture and city planning, Savannah's old-school exterior belies its status as a progressive art, design, and culinary hub.” Savannah is known for manicured parks, horse-drawn carriages and antebellum architecture. Its historic district is filled with cobblestoned squares and parks such as Forsyth Park shaded by oak trees covered with Spanish moss. It is a welcoming city of magnolias and moonlight with a pulse of excitement. Stately old mansions, moss-draped oaks and massive churches bordering the squares planned by James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733 give the city a unique flavor nowhere else in the world. Savannah tourism increased by at least 33% with John Behrendt's best-selling book, “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.” Each year Savannah attracts millions of visitors to its cobblestone streets, parks, and notable historic buildings. Savannah's downtown area, which includes 22 park like squares, is one of the largest National Historic Landmark Districts in the United States (designated by the U.S. government in 1966). Downtown Savannah largely retains the original town plan prescribed by founder James Oglethorpe (known as the Oglethorpe Plan).

In addition to top restaurants in all three cities, we will experience great tours and site seeing. Below are just a few of the daily tours we will be doing on this trip. The rest is being worked on.

Charleston's Upper King Street Historic Neighborhood Food Tour- This 2.5-hour culinary tour offers insight into the recently named top 10 food neighborhoods in America! Showcasing four of Charleston's culinary innovators who exemplify cooking in the New South! The Upper King Street district has emerged as an area with tremendous energy, showcasing culinary innovation, experimental design and boutique shopping. The restaurants featured in the tour are trailblazers in Charleston's culinary scene, edgy and innovative, with tremendous passion for their craft. This tour is designed to show off some of the best that Charleston has to offer and provide insight into Charleston's ever-changing culinary scene.

Horse Drawn Carriage- Experience more than 300 years of history on this 1-hour guided carriage tour of Charleston. See the many mansions, churches, and gardens as the tour covers more than 2.5 miles and 30 blocks of historic Charleston. Belgian and Percheron draft horses will lead us through the streets while we learn about this "Holy City" and its role in the Civil War. Take a journey that travels back in time to the colonial beginnings of Charleston. The oldest and second-largest city in South Carolina, is defined by its cobblestone streets, horse-drawn carriages and pre-Civil-War-era houses. Part of the charm of the tour is the horses that pull the carriage are the same kinds of draft horses that worked on American farms in the early 1800s.

Boat Ride- See the Charleston Harbor by boat with a 90-minute sightseeing tour along the Cooper River to Fort Sumter National Monument. This fully-narrated tour focuses on Charleston history from Civil War sites to antebellum houses and landmarks, passing under Cooper River bridges, and exploring a waterfront that's home to bottlenose dolphins and pelicans. Listen to stories from the boat captain throughout the tour, as you pass some of Charleston's historic sites. Get close up views of Fort Sumter, the fortified island where the first shots were fired in the Civil War. Pass the Essex-class USS Yorktown, a 'fighting lady' aircraft carrier from the Second World War that earned eleven battle stars in her dramatic military career. Take in Fort Moultrie and Fort Johnson, a pair of forts that housed Confederate and Union soldiers, and see St. Michael's Episcopal Church, which survived Revolutionary and Civil War fighting by painting its steeple black. Pass elegant homes on the Battery, and navigate beneath the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, a modern span that links downtown Charleston to Mount Pleasant.

Chefs Kitchen Tour- In this 3-hour morning tour we meet the talented chefs behind some of Charleston's greatest restaurants and gain insight into their ideas, methods and creativity. The Chef's Kitchen Tour will visit five restaurants and introduce us to Charleston chefs who will discuss the inspirations for their restaurants and provide a tour of their kitchens. In addition to visiting kitchens, the tour will include various samples along the way, including coffee and pastries, delicious biscuits from a celebrated Charleston biscuit maker and a selection of traditional southern dishes. If you want to meet Charleston Chefs, see inside their kitchens, hear guide Hoon Calhoun spin some tales and sample dishes along the way this is the tour!!!

