

## PLANTERS & PIONEERS DISCOVERING CHARLESTON & SAVANNAH

WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER–THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER 2022 (9 DAYS)

LECTURERS: SUSAN MCLEOD-EPSTEIN & JAMES HILL

£4475

- Opportunity to enjoy both Charleston & Savannah in their late summer glory
- Private houses & art gallery visits in both cities
- Focus on Carolina & Georgia historic houses & former plantation estates
- Based in two historic, centrally located 4\* hotels in both cities.
- Excellent food & gently paced visits with time to explore independently



### OVERVIEW

The South Carolina Colony was founded in 1663, following on from the settlement of the northern Atlantic-facing colonies in the preceding decades by English settlers. Joined by migrants from the ‘English’ Caribbean they saw in this ‘Low Country’ an opportunity to replicate the West Indian plantation model. Colonists arrived at the mouth of the Ashley River and founded their ‘Charles Town’ in honour of Charles II. In the following century rich and powerful planters exploited enslaved Africans, producing rice, cotton and indigo – the plant which produced blue dye for the textile industry - for export. In the 1730s Carolina and Great Britain strengthened their grip by founding the last American colony, Georgia, named after George II, taking over land south and west of the Savannah River. Like Charleston, the Savannah settlement was close to the Atlantic coast, while both colonies acted as a strategic check on competing Spanish settlements to the south and threats from Native Americans.

Today, Charleston is quietly elegant, its town houses and mansions built in an array of Neo-classical and ‘Revivalist’ architectural styles, dating from the Colonial and pre and post-Civil War periods. We shall visit several private houses illustrating the historic wealth of the town’s elite society. Our visit includes two of the city’s nearby plantations, above all the important Palladian-style Drayton Hall, a rare survivor of the destruction wrought by the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the latter of which began in Charleston Harbour.

Barrier islands line the rugged Atlantic coastline as we travel south to Savannah in nearby Georgia. Canopies of moss-draped oak trees are as much a feature of Savannah as the elegant squares that grace the grid-planned historic centre. Lovely historic town houses reflect the city’s wealth from its foundation in the early eighteenth century. In the warm early autumn tropical climate, our visit will be an opportunity to discover two of America’s most handsome smaller cities, veritable American ‘Southern Belles’, while their art collections and gardens will add visual splendour to a remarkable itinerary.

We stay in the historic centres of Charleston and Savannah. The historic **4\* Hotel Francis Marion** has a bar, restaurants and a spa located at the edge of South of Broad district. In Savannah we stay at the restored **4\* Mansion on Forsyth**, overlooking Forsyth Park, formerly a nineteenth century neo-Romanesque mansion. Joining James Hill will be Susan McLeod-Epstein who will lead our visit in Charleston. Susan works for The Preservation Society of Charleston and is an experienced guide. We shall also be guided by house guides and private house owners while James will act as tour manager.

### ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Wednesday 28 September – We fly from London Heathrow on American Airlines to Charleston Airport via Philadelphia, arriving in the afternoon. We spend 4 nights at the **4\* Hotel Francis Marion** and there will be a light group dinner in our hotel. Wine (or alternative), water and tea/coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

**Day 2:** Thursday 29 September – We begin at **The Charleston Museum** offering an excellent display and overview of the town's history. We continue to visit the **Joseph Manigault House**, a fine example of a pre-Civil War house. After an early lunch (not included) we visit the **Special Collections of Addleston Library** at **The College of Charleston**, the oldest metropolitan university in America. Rare manuscripts include a complete folio set of James Audobon's *Birds of America*. We return to our hotel mid-afternoon and the evening will be free.

**Day 3:** Friday 30 September – We spend the day exploring the **South of Broad** and **Battery** districts of Charleston, broken by a picnic lunch, and our focus will be several private visits where we shall be received by the owners. We shall also visit **Edmondston-Alston House**, commanding superb views across the city's harbour, and the Neo-classical **Nathaniel Russell House**. Following a fascinating day exploring the domestic architecture and interiors of some of Charleston finest houses, the remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free.

**Day 4:** Saturday 1 October – Today we visit two historic plantations located close to the Ashley River. Dating to 1738, **Drayton Hall** is the oldest Palladian-style house in America, inspired by the Villa Cornaro in the Italian Veneto. We continue the short distance to the **Middleton House** estate, where we pause for a group lunch. Though badly damaged during the Civil War, one of the restored estate houses echoes the Jacobean-style of architecture found both in Virginia and on Barbados. Inside, fine decorative arts and paintings highlight the social importance of the Middleton family. The André Le Nôtre-inspired landscaped grounds are some of the finest in the south. Following our visit, we return to our hotel and the evening will be free.

**Day 5:** Sunday 2 October – Our final morning in Charleston will be free for private explorations. After lunch (not included), we visit the **Gibbes Museum of Art** where a small permanent collection displays art of the Carolinas from Colonial times to the present day. Following our visit, we leave Charleston and drive for approximately two hours south to **Savannah** for our three-night stay at the **4\* Mansion on Forsyth** and there will be a group dinner in our hotel.

**Day 6:** Monday 3 October – Georgia's first city is graced with houses of charm, surrounded by tropical-like gardens, some of which we shall visit during our introductory walk around **Savannah's** historic centre. **Green Meldrim House** is a fine neo-Gothic home, while **Mercer Williams House** is a highbred of revivalist styles with a collection of decorative arts and the **Andrew Low House** was the home of a notable cotton planter. After lunch (not included), we conclude with a **private visit** to the home of a locally-renowned antique print and map collector. The remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free.

**Day 7:** Tuesday 4 October – Our half-day of activities begins on the river front exploring the once-busy wharf. We shall also visit two nearby Neo-classical mansions, the **Owen Thomas House** and **Harpers-Fowlkes House**, the former retaining its domestic slave quarters. We end our morning at the **Telfair Academy**, Savannah's principal art gallery which has a small permanent collection of nineteenth century American art, presented in an engaging 'house style'. Lunch (not included) and the afternoon will be free to explore Savannah independently. Later in the evening our final group dinner will be in an excellent local restaurant.

**Day 8 & Day 9:** Wednesday 5 & Thursday 6 October – On our final morning, we drive northwards and return to Charleston via **Port Royal Island** for a visit and early group lunch at the picturesque colonial town of **Beaufort**. We continue to Charleston airport for our flight to Heathrow via Philadelphia, arriving in the morning on Thursday.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Price** £4475    **Price without flights** £3695    **Deposit** £795    **Single Supplement** £595 (Double for Sole Use)

**Flight Upgrade** Tour Price is based on Economy flights. Upgrades to Premium Economy and Business Class are available. Please ask for details."

**Hotel** 4 nights with breakfast at the 4\* Hotel Francis Marion, Charleston, South Carolina and 3 nights with breakfast at the 4\* Mansion on Forsyth, Savannah, Georgia

**Flights** American Airlines/British Airways Codeshare

Outward:        **AA729** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **0915** Arrive Philadelphia **1201**  
                      **AA326** Depart Philadelphia **1550** Arrive Charleston **1745**  
Return:         **AA329** Depart Charleston **1812** Arrive Philadelphia **2001**  
                      **AA728** Depart Philadelphia **2313** Arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **1110**

**Price includes** 3 dinners & 3 lunches with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities

**Not included** Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 4 lunches



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