

# Our Favorite Memories

## Charleston & Savannah

By Tour Leader Karen Joeckle

**Staying** at the Kings Courtyard Inn in the historic district of Charleston was a wonderful experience. Our comfortable rooms, with their 18th century reproduction furnishings, were the perfect place to “come home” to after a long day of sightseeing. The late afternoon wine & cheese reception quickly became the place where we would gather to chat about the day’s activities as well as discussing where we would be having dinner that night.

Some of us didn’t know (or didn’t remember) that South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union or that Charleston was the site of the first shots fired during the Civil War; however, we were glad to be reminded of those historical facts while on the city tour. A little rain and cool temperatures didn’t stop us from having a good time while listening to stories about the history of Charleston and passing

by the magnificent mansions located South of Broad, a plethora of beautiful churches with graveyards dating back to the late 1600s, the Old Exchange Building, the City Market, Rainbow Row, and people enjoying a horse-and-carriage ride.

While at the Magnolia Plantation, we were introduced to Rosemarie Manigault who has been weaving sweetgrass baskets for more than 50 years. It takes her many hours, days or even weeks to weave the more intricate patterns and/or larger baskets, using skills taught by her ancestors. Some of the ladies bought sweetgrass baskets, which Rosemarie signed for them. During our walk through the plantation’s gardens, we met the Head Gardener, Isaac Leach—a descendant of slaves who were gardeners at the plantation prior to the Civil War, and who stayed on after they were freed. His family has passed down their gardening knowledge generation to generation and they have been taking care of the gardens ever since. The tradition continues to this day, as we were



Shopping for handmade sweetgrass baskets at Magnolia Plantation outside Charleston.



Historic homes near Charleston’s waterfront.

told the two young men working alongside Isaac are his sons.

WTT specifically chose the time for this trip to Charleston so we would be there during the Festivale of Houses and Gardens. Everyone had a wonderful time taking an afternoon walking tour which gave them the chance to see the interiors of a number of magnificent homes as well as their private yards and gardens.

Our trip continued as we left Charleston en route to Savannah, with a stop at Beaufort, SC, where we went on a walking tour led by Carolyn, a local tour guide. During our walk, Carolyn told us about the Colonial and Antebellum homes we were passing as well as many interesting stories about the history and rich, diverse cultural heritage of the “Queen of the South”

An informative trolley tour around Savannah was certainly enjoyable on a bright sunny and warm morning. Seeing all of the beautiful squares with their colorful flowers, bushes and trees in bloom made us glad to be there in the Spring.

It was lots of fun being together while we enjoyed our lunch at Paula Dean’s *Lady and Sons* Restaurant. In the afternoon everyone was free to explore the historic area of Savannah, do some last minute shopping on River Street, or visit one of the

squares where we could just sit on a bench and take it easy.

I wasn't wrong when I thought I'd be able to catch up with everyone later in the afternoon at our wine and cheese reception at the Marshall House Hotel. This charming hotel was built in 1851, was used as a hospital during the Civil War, and is said to be haunted.

All too soon, we were having our Farewell Dinner and reminiscing about all of the interesting places we visited and things we did in both Charleston and Savannah—vowing to come back again to experience more of the Southern Hospitality we enjoyed throughout the trip. ❖



Photo op in Beauford, South Carolina.



Porches in Beauford.



This looks like it could be a classic example of New Orleans' French Quarter architecture but this one of many historic homes we saw in Savannah.