

Our Favorite Memories

Savannah & the Golden Isles

By Tour Leader Karen Joeckle

Located in the heart of the historic downtown area, The Marshall House was a great place to stay during our visit to Savannah. The location was perfect for exploring the city, walking to great restaurants for dinner, visiting River Street, going to museums, touring historical homes such as the Davenport House, shopping at City Market and seeing Savannah's famous squares filled with lovely flowers and blooming trees.

The Marshall House was built in 1851 by Savannah businesswoman Mary Marshal who felt the city was woefully short on gracious accommodations for visitors. The hotel served as a hospital during the Civil War for both the Confederate and Union armies but gradually fell into disrepair and closed as a hotel in 1956. A \$12 million restoration in 2001 brought it back to its former glory. Although some say the hotel is haunted by Civil War soldiers who died there, none of us saw any ghosts during our stay.



Savannah's River Street

The Historic Savannah Trolley City Tour introduced us to the city's rich history beginning with founder General James Oglethorpe's dream in 1733 to create a city with wide open streets and shady public squares. Twenty-one of Oglethorpe's twenty four original public squares exist today giving the city its unique character. A boat cruise on the Savannah Rive and a late night Trolley Haunted Tour added to our understanding and enjoyment of what is known as America's first planned city.

We also took a one day trip to the Golden Isles of Georgia, a series of barrier islands along the Atlantic Ocean. On Jekyll Island, famous as a Victorian-era resort, we saw the Macy, Gold, Goodyear and Astor vacation "cottages" (in reality, mansions!) and learned how the 19th century rich spent their vacation time on the island. Later in the day visiting St. Simons, a few of the ladies took on the challenge and climbed the stairs to the top of the island's famous lighthouse.

Food, wonderful food...Savannah is noted for its fabulous restaurants and we definitely enjoyed the best of southern cuisine at restaurants such as the Olde Pink House and Vic's on the River. Most of us also visited Leopold's Ice Cream Shop, located near the hotel and a Savannah favorite since 1919, for a quick lunch and then some ice cream treats for dessert.



St. Simon Lighthouse—
it was a long way up!

A highlight of one of our dining experiences was seeing *Food Network* chef Paula Deen while we were eating at the Lady and Sons restaurant owned by Paula and her sons. During dinner, Paula burst into the dining room and shouted out, "Hi Ya'll. Thanks for coming!" taking us all by surprise. Ms. Deen then graciously allowed those with cameras to take her photo before leaving as quickly as she had appeared.

We all experienced and enjoyed the world famous "southern hospitality" on this trip—the way everyone made us feel welcome in Savannah. We will definitely think about that invitation to "Come back ya'll." ❖



A WTT traveler with Paula Deen