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ELLE Escapes: Charleston



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With cobblestone streets, horse-drawn carriages, and antebellum mansions, visiting Charleston feels like stepping into a different era. The South Carolina port city, founded in 1670, enjoys mild temperatures well into the winter and early spring, making it a great destination for those looking for 60s and sunshine during the colder months.

Wandering here is such a pleasure, especially in the French Quarter—a historic neighborhood where I found myself wanting to stop to take a photo of a colorful clapboard home, impressively large porch, or a cluster of Spanish-moss covered live oaks every few steps. While many restaurant menus here are full of Southern classics like hush puppies and fried green tomatoes, as well as the local favorite She Crab Soup, others, like [Basic Kitchen](#), offer inventive, vegetable-forward takes on regional fare (try the corn ribs). And of course, don't forget the sweet tea.

There's also plenty of shopping, art, history, and culture to keep you entertained. Read on for more ideas for what to do, eat, and drink while you're in town.

Where to Stay

Mills House



COURTESY MILLS HOUSE

Mills House is perhaps one of the most eye-pleasing landmark hotels in downtown Charleston. Located in the historic French Quarter, it's easy to spot with its charming pink exterior. It's also conveniently located to many attractions, and within walking distance of the Waterfront Park pier. Having undergone a recent multi-million dollar renovation, the property features a rooftop bar and terrace, pool, café, and restaurant. Inside, you'll find tall ceilings and inviting interiors. Rooms are elegantly furnished, incorporating modern stylish furnishings, with old southern charm, making it very hard to leave. Did someone say "room service"?