

Abingdon Manor, Latta

At this seven room Greek revival mansion just outside of Florence, even the coffee—touched with cinnamon and served with whipping cream—is special. But that's just the beginning. Continue your evening after dinner with chocolate and chilled split of Champagne that you'll find in your room when you return. Early risers will find coffee, tea, hot chocolate and even hot cider on the landing before breakfast. But don't skip a trip downstairs: Patty's French toast is worth getting up for and the smell of the fresh mint that decorates the morning fruit plate is intoxicating. (888-752-5090 www.bbonline.com/sc/)

Litchfield Plantation, Pawley's Island

Although it's located about 10 minutes from the ocean, Litchfield Plantation, a 32-room inn on the site of a former rice plantation, sees to it that guests can enjoy a perfect beach experience too: the Inn owns a three-story oceanfront house on nearby Pawley's Island. Complete with refrigerators, umbrellas, beach towels, shower and changing facilities and shady porches, the house makes a day at the beach, well, a day at the beach. (800-869-1410 www.litchfieldplantation.com)

Wentworth Mansion, Charleston

Begin your stay at this 1886 manse with a short history tour that begins in the high-ceilinged foyer and ends in your room. Afterwards, enjoy a glass of sherry, port or brandy in the library, or enjoy the luxurious surroundings of your room, where you'll find a stocked fridge and a bag of crunchy peanuts. Whether you have dinner at the hotel's celebrated restaurant, the AAA Five Diamond honoree, Circa 1886, or at one of Charleston's many other choices, be sure to save a little room—the chocolates on your pillow are made in house and vary each night based on what the pastry chef is in the mood to concoct. (888-466-1886 www.charminginns.com)

Inn at Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton

The inn's 50 Lowcountry-style guest cottages are elegant with dark wood furnishings and soft rugs over heart pine floors. In the massive marble bathrooms, complete with private steam chambers, custom amenities will envelop you in the intoxicating scents of the region such as jasmine, pine and magnolia. Thoughtful touches are everywhere, from the fridge filled with your favorite beverages to the snacks and wine placed in your cottage, to the nature guide and binoculars—not to mention bug spray—on the table and even up-to-date magazines to enjoy on the wide back porch. Bikes, the transportation mode of choice for exploring the resort's wide, flat trails, are complimentary. (866-706-6565 www.palmettobluffresort.com)

Better than Home

By Katie McElveen

Whether you're looking for the best beaches, a Lowcountry retreat, mountain magic or a city-savvy oasis, these dreamy South Carolina hotels and inns will pamper you with lovely touches that bring Southern hospitality to life.

Planter's Inn, Charleston

Step into another century at Planter's Inn, the circa 1844 former dry goods emporium that has been transformed into an elegant 62-room hideaway.

A frosty pitcher of the Inn's signature quaff—an addictive blend of sweet orange, aromatic spices and black tea—greet guests as they leave bustling Meeting Street and enter the serene oasis of the Inn. As you sip, plan your own personal tour of Charleston with the help of the Inn's particularly well-informed concierge staff, who is happy to set up tours of some of Charleston's lesser-known gems with local historians, curators and antique dealers. (800-845-7082 www.planterstinn.com)

The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island, Kiawah Island

Attention to detail is what makes the 255-room Sanctuary at Kiawah Island feel more like a turn-of-the-20th-century oceanside mansion than a resort, but it's also a reminder that this elite destination is as luxurious as they come.

You'll feel welcome from the moment you set foot in the antique-filled lobby thanks to the polite staff member who greets each and every guest who enters and offers whatever assistance he or she can. Savor homemade cookies—sugar crisps, macadamia nut chewies or even benne seed wafers—while you check in. (877-683-1234 www.thesanctuary.com)

La Bastide, Greenville

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains just outside of Greenville, La Bastide Country Inn and Restaurant brings the south of France to South Carolina: not only is the inn a chateau, but a number of the inn's objets d'art are French antiques from the 17th and 18th century.

Complimentary breakfast – try the homemade blueberry muffins whether you enjoy the buffet or order from the menu – is served in the breezy breakfast room on fine china. Afterwards, head to the lovely walled garden where you can enjoy a game of croquet. (877-836-8463 www.labastide.com)

Wherever you choose to make your South Carolina destination for your next vacation, the Southern hospitality and pampering will ensure you come back again.