

ISLAND TREASURES

GORGEOUS ISLANDS THAT WE'RE PRETTY SURE YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF BY KIM-MARIE EVANS



South Carolina's Sea Islands offer the ultimate getaway for rest and relaxation (and, of course, the freshest seafood).

There is no need to travel across the globe in search of wild and windswept islands. South Carolina's fabled Sea Islands are secrets hiding in plain sight. When the *New York Times* wrote a story in 1983 about South Carolina's "Secret Isles," locals were so protective they (unsuccessfully) begged the author not to publish it. Though Hilton Head and Kiawah are regularly featured in glossy travel magazines, smaller islands like **DAUFUSKIE**, **EDISTO** and **ST. PHILLIPS** have managed to elude the spotlight—until now.

STEEPED IN HISTORY

After the Civil War, the plantation owners who had been growing cotton on Daufuskie abandoned the land and "gave" it to the freed slaves. With little access to the mainland, the descendants of those slaves kept the Gullah traditions alive, making it a wonderful place to experience this rich culture.

A day trip to **Daufuskie Island**—a short boat ride just a mile from Hilton

Head—cuts through hundreds of years of history. Visitors find more than just museums. They find a preserved way of life—vibrant churches, century-old, blue-windowed oyster houses and deviled crabs for sale on front porches.

While there are three Hilton-Head style developments on Daufuskie Island (which counts John Mellencamp as a resident), much of the island is a historic district. Homes, churches, schools and

graveyards appear as they might have 100 years ago. Sallie Ann Robinson is a sixth-generation Gullah who fights to preserve and share Daufuskie's history for years. Her efforts caught the attention of Oprah Winfrey, or "Miss O" as Sallie Ann calls her, who featured Sallie Ann in a story in *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

If you can't make it to Daufuskie in person, pick up her latest cookbook, *Sallie Ann Robinson's Kitchen*:

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Food and Family Lore from the Lowcountry. She offers a variety of dishes passed down through generations of Gullah families, from Down-Home Red Tada Sallet to Robinson's Grandmomma's Seafood Gumbo. "Nobody ever wrote anything down when they cooked. Recipes were passed down simply from observing and then doing," she says. daufuskieisland.com

CASTAWAY FOR A DAY

Take the road less traveled, literally, to **Edisto Island**, where you won't find a crowd, a hotel or even a traffic light. Around a hundred years ago, before there was a bridge to Edisto, people came anyway. They drove over the marsh and the oyster beds from Charleston or Savannah at low tide to gain access. Back then, the island was used primarily as a retreat with homes hobbled together for weekend getaways. Day-trippers can stretch out on the mile and a half of pristine state park beach or hike its hauntingly majestic boneyard beach. Boneyard beaches are sea forests that have been created from erosion, leaving an otherworldly landscape of tree skeletons rising from the sand. One of the most dramatic is at Botany Bay on Edisto. Your Instagram will thank me. edistobeach.com

A BILLIONAIRE'S HIDEAWAY

Until three years ago, **St. Phillips Island** was the exclusive beach retreat of Ted Turner's family for forty years. The famed conservationist and billionaire bought this



(from top) Boneyard Beach on St. Phillips Island • Leisure time at Haig Point on Daufuskie Island • Calibogue Club restaurant on Daufuskie Island

little island, accessible only by boat near Hilton Head, in 1979. Outside of the five-bedroom home he built, he left a very light footprint on this sleepy island. In 2018 he sold the island to the state of South Carolina.

South Carolina now rents the house out for \$12,000 for a five-night stay (it's the only rental option). Don't want any day-trippers ruining your beach naps? Up the rental to \$20,000 for five nights; and as long as you book three months in advance, the state will cancel all incoming boat tours. During your stay you'll have access to bicycles, kayaks, golf carts to get you to the beach, a fishing pier and miles of hiking trails through the ancient dunes. A pool table, game room, flatscreen televisions, and a hammock on a large, screened porch are among the home's amenities.

To book, or for more information, contact the St. Phillips Island Event Coordinator at mgonzalez@scprt.com or 803-904-6220.



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