

VIE
MAGAZINE

THE GREAT RESPITE

**HIT THE
ROAD!**
DRIVABLE DESTINATIONS
AROUND *the* SOUTHEAST
and BEYOND

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REVIVAL**
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Are a BLAST
from the PAST

STORIES OF
WANDERLUST
FOR THE SOUL

DOWN *the* ROAD *a* PIECE

*Southern Small-Town
Destinations That Are
Worth the Drive*

By CAROLYN O'NEIL

While we may not be able to jet off to any far-flung global adventures right now, the highways and byways of America beckon many travelers seeking new horizons closer to home. The great American road trip has become more appealing than ever and, thanks to affordable gas prices, even more approachable.

A new survey conducted by Virtuoso shows that 70 percent of US travelers are choosing vacation destinations less than 1500 miles from their homes.

Happily for residents of the southeastern United States, there are lots of beautiful destinations worth the drive, many with world-class accommodations ranging from updated historic favorites to sleek new lodgings. So, hitting the road doesn't have to mean cutting corners. Atlanta-based Virtuoso travel advisor Jennifer Falk Weiss of Currie & Co. Travels Unlimited says, "Just because this is the season of the road trip doesn't mean vacation plans have to be scaled back. I can help plan amped-up on-the-road adventures with specialized tours, luxury hotels, gourmet meals, and wine tastings, and I'll check on what's open and what's not. All you have to do is get behind the wheel and drive!"



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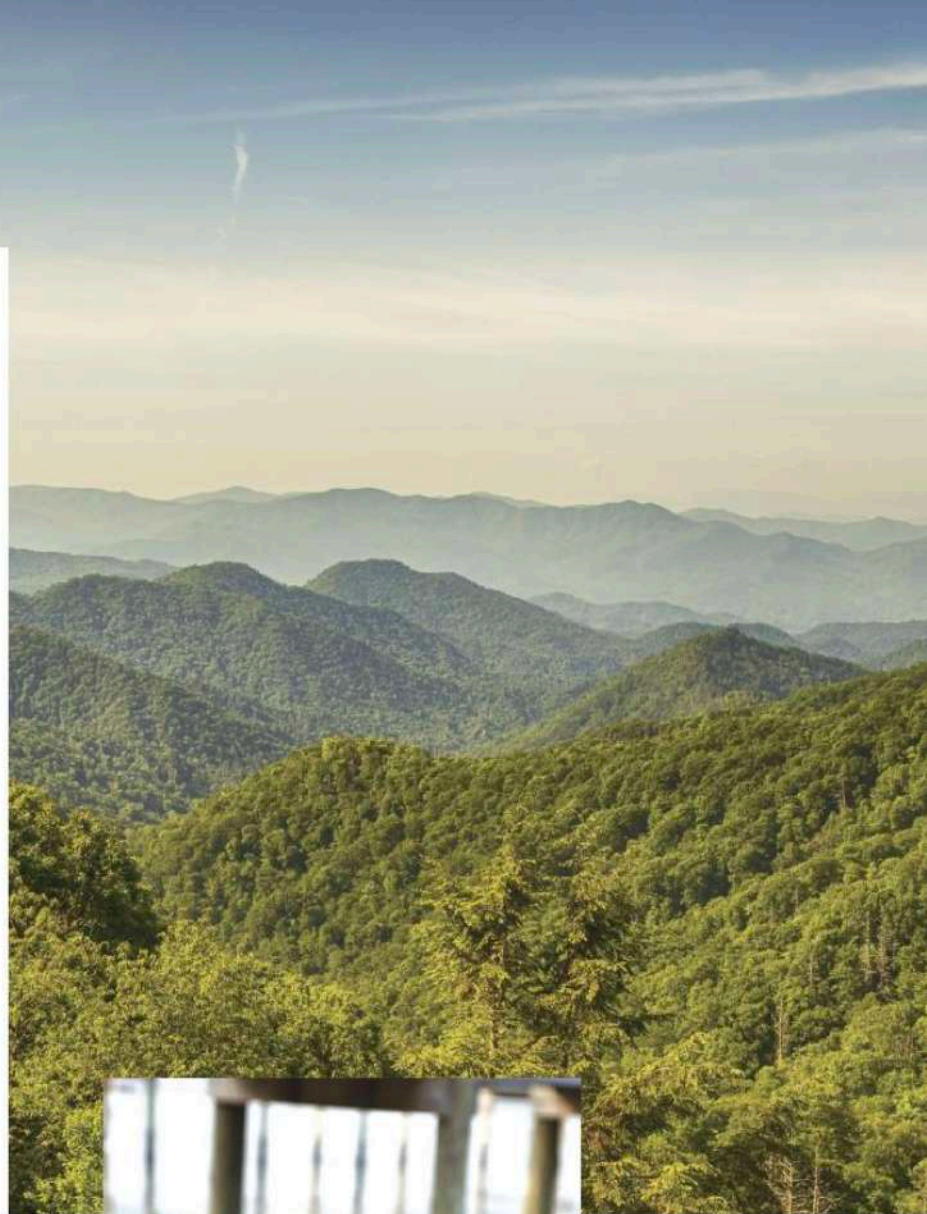
Domestic travel is HOT right now, especially for travelers seeking OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES in a natural setting, such as hiking, fishing, and swimming.

While it's certainly possible to do your own online search for travel news and tips, using a travel advisor is becoming even more essential for travelers today because these professionals are up for the challenges presented by travel right now. They keep track of COVID-19-related cancellation policies and recommend the places doing the best job of practicing updated safety and sanitation protocols.

Virtuoso represents a total network of twenty-two thousand travel advisors and two thousand partner destinations and properties worldwide.

Southeastern destinations, hotels, and resorts are mindful of and making improvements based on the very latest in consumer travel trends, including increased demand for wellness escapes, outdoor adventures, seclusion, and local culture tours. “Domestic travel is hot right now, especially for travelers seeking outdoor activities in a natural setting, such as hiking, fishing, and swimming,” says Misty Belles, managing director at Virtuoso travel network. “And we’ve found that includes a desire to have a positive impact on the communities they visit.”

But before you pack your things and back out of the driveway, here for your consideration are some Southern road trip destinations newly ready to welcome visitors with a quiet charm perfectly fitting for the times.



Above: The Great Smoky Mountains as seen from the top of Clingmans Dome on the border of Tennessee and North Carolina.

Left: A blue crab caught in a net along the banks of Mobile Bay in Fairhope, Alabama

Photo by
Fontaine Howard

Opposite: Take a walk or dine on the docks at Fishcamp on 11th Street for a view of shrimp boats at Port Royal near Beaufort, South Carolina.

BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA

One hour from its big sister neighbor Charleston and forty-five minutes from nearby Savannah, charming Beaufort is situated in the tidal low country of South Carolina. Marshes alive with birdlife make a beautiful backdrop for sunsets that cast the area in an even more magical light. This small town lined with great oaks is a true village of little shops, restaurants, cottage homes, and historic antebellum mansions. There's a lot to see and do, from carriage tours to kayak adventures.

If you care to put your book down and venture out of your hammock, head into town to visit the Pat Conroy Literary Center, which preserves the legacy of the noted best-selling author who graduated from Beaufort High School and later taught English there.

Take a short drive to the long boardwalk at Port Royal for a stroll, or set out for Parris Island to learn about the history of the United States Marine Corps outlined in the Parris Island Museum.

Beaufort promises salty breezes, sweet tea, and savory coastal seafood. Don't miss sampling shrimp and grits, a local specialty you can enjoy for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Where to Dine

- » **Saltus River Grill** offers elegant dining in downtown Beaufort. SaltusRiverGrill.com
- » Head to **Fishcamp on 11th Street** for waterfront dining on Port Royal's shrimp docks. FishcampOn11th.com

Where to Stay

There are a number of historical B and Bs in Beaufort, with many located in the historic district.

- » One noted inn is the **Anchorage 1770**, which is pet friendly, on the water with fabulous rooftop views, and within walking distance of Bay Street, Beaufort's pretty main thoroughfare. Anchorage1770.com

For visitor information, head to BeaufortSC.org.

Right: After your drive to beautiful Beaufort, South Carolina, why not take in the gorgeous natural surroundings from a different perspective—the water?



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“
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WALLAND, TENNESSEE

Located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, where the thick morning mist gives the hilly region its name, Walland is where you’ll find one of the most celebrated properties in the southeastern United States: Blackberry Farm, a Relais & Châteaux resort.

The younger sibling to the renowned Blackberry Farm is Blackberry Mountain, designed to be genuinely unmatched with wellness and outdoor activities and an endless number of experiences that highlight fitness adventures—from trail biking and rock climbing to mountaintop yoga and meditation.

Pampering is still key, but with more active physical adventures and mental stimulation. At Blackberry Mountain, guests choose activities with guidance provided by on-property experts, even if their goal is simply to relax.

“Most people live in a state of constant stimulation. How rare is it to actually slow down and pause?” says Dr. Jill Beasley, the holistic health specialist at Blackberry

Mountain. This emphasis is even more important than ever, thanks to this year’s lessons in self-care and a newfound appreciation for solitude and privacy. “There’s a societal shift, and people are acknowledging that it’s okay to rest. There is wisdom in finding balance, and it’s refreshing.”

Serenely set on over 5,200 acres in the Great Smoky Mountains, Blackberry Mountain offers culinary discoveries as well with small group cooking and mixology classes featuring locally sourced ingredients, including those foraged from the wild by the property’s chefs.

For more information, visit BlackberryMountain.com.

Above: Relaxing and exploring nature are at the top of the itinerary at Blackberry Farm and Blackberry Mountain in scenic Walland, Tennessee.

Above left: At the end of a long day, enjoy gourmet farm-to-table meals prepared by Blackberry Farm’s chefs.

Photos by Beall + Thomas Photography, courtesy of Blackberry Farm



PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

Once you cross the bridge over the yacht-lined Intracoastal Waterway from the lively city of West Palm Beach, you'll be greeted by stately royal palms and the calmer, quieter pace of life in ultramanicured Palm Beach. It's a town that sleeps in summer and awakens for the "season," now extending from fall to early spring.

Since the late 1800s, Palm Beach has been the Florida playground for movie stars, aristocrats, captains of industry, and a few boat captains too. But all visitors today will feel as welcome as a tropical breeze on a hot, sunny day. Explore the gilded past of Palm Beach's history at the Flagler Museum (the former grand estate of railroad tycoon Henry Flagler), hop on a bicycle or grab your running shoes to tour past beachfront mansions with beautiful gardens, or stroll down iconic Worth Avenue for some retail therapy. It's here you'll find the flagship boutique for Lilly Pulitzer, a mecca of Palm Beach style since the 1960s.

Where to Dine

- » **Buccan** is lively, and so is the food; it's one of local celebrity chef Clay Conley's popular restaurants.
- » **Café Boulud**, Chef Daniel Boulud's restaurant in Palm Beach, has the look and feel of a European café.
- » **Scusi Trattoria**, recently opened in nearby Palm Beach Gardens, is a coastal Italian restaurant by award-winning chef Laurent Tourondel.

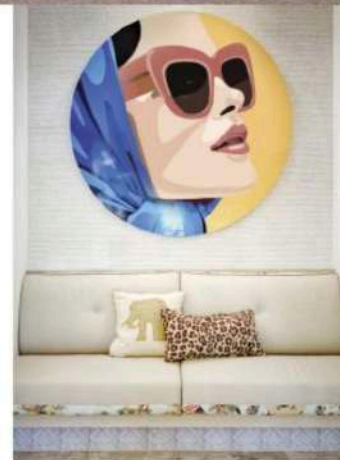
- » **SurfSide Diner**, in the heart of Palm Beach, is a classic American diner popular with locals. They serve mimosas with brunch too!

Where to Stay

From the historically grand Breakers to tiny tucked-away hotels with bougainvillea-scented gardens, Palm Beach specializes in elegant accommodations.

White Elephant Palm Beach – The newest addition to Palm Beach's hotel scene, this thirty-two-room boutique property set in a 1920s Mediterranean Revival building overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway is scheduled to open in November. It's the sister property of the White Elephant in Nantucket, Massachusetts. WhiteElephantPalmBeach.com

The Chesterfield Palm Beach – Travelers might not be able to "hop the pond" to Europe, but they can experience the elegance of traditional afternoon tea and the fine details of sophisticated service at the Red Carnation Hotels' Chesterfield Palm Beach. Don't miss the legendary Leopard Lounge. ChesterfieldPB.com



This page: For a chic Mediterranean-style beach getaway that's only a road trip away, book your stay at the new White Elephant boutique hotel on the island of Palm Beach, Florida.

Photos by Chi-Thien Nguyen, courtesy of Elkus Manfredi Architects



JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA

The low-country vibe here is relaxed and serene with wide marshes and quiet roads shaded by canopies of oaks cloaked in Spanish moss. It's an excellent destination for history buffs who'll find ruins of tabby walls and cottages built in the late 1800s, echoing bygone days when this was a resort area frequented by America's wealthiest families. This once-private retreat is now part of the Jekyll Island Club National Historic Landmark District, one of the most significant preservation projects in the Southeast.

Can you hear me now? In 1915, the nation's first transcontinental telephone call was made here when American Telephone & Telegraph president Theodore Newton Vail, who was staying on Jekyll Island, had a chat with President Woodrow Wilson in Washington, D.C., Alexander Graham Bell in New York, and two others.

Where to Stay

- » **Jekyll Island Club Resort** – Timing is everything, as they say, and this year the resort chose to deep clean and upgrade all of their guest rooms and suites with new mattresses, window treatments, and renovated bathrooms. The focal point of this historic property is the Clubhouse, built in 1888. Enjoy a game of croquet on the south lawn or a classic cocktail on the huge wraparound porch.
- » **Jekyll Ocean Club**, featuring forty suites, a swimming pool steps from the beach, and an oceanfront restaurant, is the newest addition to the Jekyll Island Club Resort. It is the only all-suite oceanfront boutique hotel on Jekyll Island.
JekyllClub.com

Visit JekyllIsland.com to plan your trip.



FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA

Perched on a bluff overlooking Alabama's Gulf Coast, pretty Fairhope, founded in 1894, has sweeping views of Mobile Bay and is dotted with lovely parks. You can walk along the bay front to see all of the fabulous historic homes and enjoy popping into local art galleries, museums, gift shops, and the Page and Palette bookstore to browse the latest reads and enjoy a caffe latte. Known as a writer's haven, Fairhope is a favorite of Alabama native and best-selling author Fannie Flagg. She wrote three books and a screenplay there, including *The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion*, which was set in Fairhope.



Where to Dine

- » **Fish River Grill** is a Gulf Coast seafood favorite in Fairhope. You'll have to go there to find out why Swamp Soup is so popular! What's the scene? Think iced tea in mason jars and platters of fried green tomatoes.
- » **Sunset Pointe at Fly Creek Marina** got its name for a reason. The sunsets are spectacular here, and there's plenty of outdoor seating. The menu celebrates the best in local seafood and fresh produce.

Where to Stay

- » **The Fairhope Inn** – Locally owned and newly renovated, this is a charming inn with a popular restaurant. *TheFairhopeInn.com*
- » **Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa** – Located in nearby Point Clear, this hotel resort is one of the most luxurious in the area. *Grand1847.com* 📍

Carolyn O'Neil is an award-winning Atlanta-based food writer who specializes in culinary travel and healthy lifestyles. She believes that travel is the ultimate way to learn about the people of the world and cuisine is the most exciting way to learn about their histories and culture. Visit her blog at TheHappyHealthyKitchen.com.

Above left: The Jekyll Ocean Club on Georgia's Jekyll Island offers incredible views and an exclusive feel so you can truly get away from it all.

Photo courtesy of Jekyll Island Club Resort

Above right: Small-town charm and Southern hospitality abound throughout beautiful Fairhope, Alabama.

Photos by Devan Watkins