

# *//DESTINATION//* **iDO.**

## SOUTHERN CHARM

RICH HISTORY MEETS SIGNATURE HOSPITALITY AT CHARLESTON WEDDINGS

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*The historic South Carolina city of Charleston beckons brides and grooms to revel in her majesty, her mansions and her many excellent dining establishments. Along with fine hotels and gracious inns, superb cuisine and guest activities galore, you can expect a healthy helping of Southern hospitality at your Charleston wedding.*

**GETTING THERE, GETTING AROUND** Traveling from Houston to Charleston is a breeze, with several direct flights on United and Southwest available daily. The airport is easily navigated, and taxi or Uber transportation gets you into town in under half an hour.

Check into the newly constructed Hotel Bennett or luxurious Belmond Charleston Place, and you'll find yourself located in the city's charming historic district without sacrificing resort amenities. To start your guests' Charleston experience on the right hoof, arrange for visitors to take a carriage ride with Palmetto Tours. While all of the local tour operators take very good care of their horses and mules, Palmetto kicks it up a notch, with knowledgeable (and very humorous) tour guides who bring the city and its history to life.

And while you're at it, why not convene your destination-wedding guests, before the big day, at popular Leon's Oyster Shop, in the eatery's private indoor-outdoor "oyster shed." It's an ideal setting for settling in to the Charleston vibe, as you enjoy char-grilled oysters, black-eye-pea salad and craft-brewed local beers.

**VENUE VARIETY** The beauty of a Charleston destination wedding lies in the city's variety of wedding and reception venues, from historic to modern to lowcountry-local. Both the Hotel Bennett and Belmond Charleston Place are excellent choices for weddings, and their restaurants, Gabrielle and Charleston Grill, respectively, offer many options for rehearsal dinners. Want to treat your guests to a taste of Charleston, off-property? A stroll down the street gets you to classic restaurants including Halls Chophouse and the Peninsula Grill—the latter is also a fantastic option for a smaller wedding in the interior courtyard of adjacent Planters Inn, complete with the restaurant's famous multi-layered coconut cake as your wedding dessert.

Charleston is a city of design, as evidenced in the countless ornate iron gates and manicured gardens scattered throughout the historic district. The Gibbes Museum houses art from around the world, but concentrates on local art throughout the ages, as well as contemporary projects. The garden of this esteemed cultural institution offers an intimate wedding ceremony site, and the museum's galleries

can accommodate artful and unique wedding receptions.

A completely different but equally unique venue is tucked away in a nondescript neighborhood where, upon opening the door to Cannon Green, you are transported into "old Charleston," complete with remnants of the city's original buildings. Celebration spaces at this light-filled venue include the Garden Room, centered around the restored, original façade of an 1840s house, and the Trolley Room, with 3,000 square feet of column-free space, created in a historic industrial building. Receptions reap the benefits of Cannon Green's divine cuisine, with wedding menus featuring such items as jumbo lump crab cakes, watermelon-and-grilled-ricotta salad, and, naturally...fried green tomatoes!



For easygoing elegance and a taste of history, The Cedar Room at Mercantile and Mash, located near Charleston's port, is a former cigar factory built in 1881. This spacious venue features original hardwood floors, brick walls, and floor-to-ceiling windows that reveal a view of the architecturally acclaimed Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge. With room to accommodate 300 guests for a seated dinner, The Cedar Room also has a lovely outdoor courtyard and gardens—perfect for cocktails or intimate wedding ceremonies.

Close to Charleston, yet seemingly a world away, is Lowndes Grove, a massive home on the Ashley River, restored to its 1786-era magnificence. A dock, outdoor tented patio and several verandas create a variety of

ceremony and reception locations.

The Governor Thomas Bennett House is unique in Charleston for its extraordinary gardens and its collection of fine art, and can serve as a ceremony site as well as a reception venue. Stunningly decorated in the mid-1800s era of Governor Bennett, the venue hosts only one wedding per weekend, so when it's your big day, you know it's all yours. Proceeds from rentals go to keeping the house as beautiful as it was when you first laid eyes on it, so that future generations of wedding couples can continue to enjoy its grandeur.

**ISLAND ESCAPE** About 20 miles outside of the city of Charleston lies private Kiawah Island, with its gorgeous beaches and internationally recognized golf courses and tennis facilities. Although there are rental homes on Kiawah, The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort is the center of dining and entertainment. With the recent opening of the resort's 150-seat light-filled chapel, complete with locally made stained glass, The Sanctuary has even more to offer for destination weddings. After a ceremony in the chapel, gather your guests for cocktails in the courtyard before heading into the Grand Oaks Ballroom, or have some fun down the road at Mingo Point, where a custom oyster grill is the focus of their famous oyster roasts and barbecues.

Kiawah Island and its golf courses provide plenty of alternative venues, and can accommodate weddings just about anywhere, from driving ranges to oceanfront bluffs, with plenty of options for outdoor cocktail receptions, food-station celebrations and indoor seated dining. From Osprey Point, where the famous alligators scatter when the wedding chairs are set up, to Turtle Point, and its elegant verandas and Italian-inspired clubhouse, Kiawah Golf Resort has something for everyone—and every wedding.



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