

ESCAPE



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: THE CLOISTER; SEA ISLAND SUITE AT THE CLOISTER; RETIRE AT GOLF COURSE; BAGPIPER; COTTAGE AT THE LODGE.



QUICK TRIPS

PEACHY Keen

Southern hospitality reaches its apex at GEORGIA'S SEA ISLAND

By Mary Murray

Few destinations capture the charm and refinement of Southern living quite like Sea Island. Upon entering this resort, nestled on the southeastern coast of Georgia, one becomes enchanted with an abundance of native flora and fauna, all of which is complemented by an array of accommodations. Spanish moss drapes across the serpentine branches of Southern live oaks, resurrection ferns crawling up the historic trees' trunks. Brown marsh rabbits hop along the water's banks as eagles soar high overhead. All of this sets the scene for languid days of sunbathing, adventurous excursions amid nature, and rigorous rounds on the golf course, among other pursuits.

To be close to it all, book a room at The Cloister. Although the original Mediterranean-style building—conceived by architect Addison Mizner—no longer remains, the new iteration of The Cloister carries on its legacy, complete with a Spanish Lounge that features a ceiling, chandeliers, and stained-glass windows saved from the circa-1928 design. One nook worthy of many visits is the solarium, where the chirps of peach-faced and yellow-collared lovebirds fill the sundrenched space. On the upper floors, arcades give way to plush guest rooms and suites outfitted with hardwood floors, Turkish rugs, and beamed ceilings.

From The Cloister, it's a short saunter to the



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spa or the Beach Club, where guests can savor fresh seafood at Southern Tide or hit the bowling lanes at Sea Strike & Pub. Here, you can also peruse the Nature Center or embark on an outing with a resident naturalist. To learn even more about Sea Island and its inhabitants—both past and present, animal and human—reserve a bike tour with a historian, who will give you the inside scoop on a few of the 600 or so private cottages dotting the property, some of which are available to rent.

Perhaps the best thing about a Sea Island vacation is that there truly is never a dull moment (unless that's what you're into). From tennis to squash, falconry to horseback riding, there's an activity to suit every interest. Over at The Lodge, golf reigns supreme. In addition to

an 18-hole putting course, visitors can choose from three courses and work on their swing at the Golf Performance Center. The Lodge also houses onsite guest rooms as well as cottages nestled along the greens. Each evening, a bagpiper makes an appearance, upholding the Scottish tradition of playing the golf courses "to sleep."

And while it may be their bedtime, it doesn't have to be yours. Head to the Oak Room to tuck into Southern comfort food with a twist. Think: charred buffalo cauliflower in a tangy hot sauce; fried chicken that has been brined, sous vide, and flash fried to perfection; and Georgia shrimp and grits served with a lemon beurre blanc and lobster oil. Finish the evening with a nightcap from the playful cocktail menu. We recommend the Jackie-O, a mix of Sea Island Guild Gin, St-Germain, lemon, cinnamon, egg white, and a dash of "presidential grace," a trait Sea Island has in spades. (seaisland.com) ◀◀