

HOST & HOME · LUXURY VACATION RENTALS

Winter on Hilton Head Island

Events, dining, golf, and curated stays for the season

Experience winter on the island with a local perspective. As the crowds thin and the island settles into its quieter season, winter brings crisp salt air, harbors strung with holiday lights, and open fairways to explore Sea Pines, Palmetto Dunes, and Forest Beach.

> **THE QUICK ANSWER**
>
> Winter on Hilton Head Island means quiet beaches, oysters at their peak, and a harbor strung with holiday lights — from the Hilton Head Island Oyster Festival to Harbour Town Lights. Whether you're planning a weekend trip or an extended stay, it's one of the best times of year to visit.

Our Host & Home Winter Area Guide connects you with the best seasonal events, quiet beach paths, and curated local favorites. Host & Home handles every detail before you arrive — offering a higher standard of care and a better way to stay on Hilton Head Island.

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EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Explore

What to see and do around the island this winter.



01

Hilton Head Island Oyster Festival

For more than thirty years, the Hilton Head Island Oyster Festival has been an Island Recreation Association tradition that locals and visitors build their calendars around. This rain-or-shine event means all-you-can-eat steamed local oyster clusters, a Lowcountry boil, pulled pork, shrimp and grits, and chili, with drinks sold separately. Live music runs throughout, and the crowd is part of the draw as much as the food. Tickets are $60 with limited availability, so it's worth booking ahead. Mark your calendar for November 6th and 7th and come hungry.



02

Thanksgiving Turtle Trot

The Palmetto Dunes Turtle Trot brings families out for a flat, scenic 5K along the hard-packed sand of Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort, with a special Thanksgiving edition added to its regular spring-through-summer series. Runners and walkers of every pace start and finish at The Dunes House, tracing the shoreline with the ocean the whole way. Sea Turtle Patrol HHI is the race's official charity partner, so every entry supports the volunteers who protect the island's nesting turtles. Registration includes a custom race shirt and a personalized bib for each participant. It's a low-key way to spend part of a holiday weekend outdoors, on the same beaches the trot exists to help protect.



03

Harbour Town Lights

Harbour Town turns into the island's holiday postcard once the sun goes down, its harbor lined with illuminated seasonal figures and a towering Christmas tree at the center of it all. The official tree lighting takes place just before the Gregg Russell Concert at 7:30 PM on Friday, November 27th, and the display runs nightly through January 1st. Shops and restaurants along the harbor stay lit and lively, with seasonal music and live entertainment adding to the walk. It's an easy stop after dinner or a round of golf nearby, and one families tend to return to more than once each winter.



04

Shelter Cove Lights

Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina spends the season as a glowing waterfront village, its docks and walkways strung with holiday lights and seasonal displays. The signature "Coastal Christmas" boat lights parade adds a Lowcountry twist to the traditional evening stroll past twinkling storefronts. Locally owned boutiques and galleries stay open for holiday shopping, and seven waterfront restaurants keep tables going for dinner with a view of the lights. It's a walkable, unhurried way to spend a winter evening on the island, whether you're shopping, dining, or just taking in the marina after dark.

FEATURED WINTER EVENT

Hilton Head Island Lantern Festival

Saturday, November 14, 2026 · Coligny Beach Coastline



Mark your calendars: on Saturday, November 14th, Hilton Head Island's night sky and the Coligny Beach coastline glow together for the Town's annual Lantern Parade. Now one of the island's most anticipated winter traditions, the parade celebrates Hilton Head's history, natural beauty, and community spirit through hundreds of handcrafted lanterns carried by residents, visitors, school groups, and local organizations. Acclaimed lantern artist Chantelle Rytter leads the procession with her own large-scale illuminated creations, floating alongside the crowd's homemade designs. Four bands carry the night's soundtrack down the beach: the Black Sheep Ensemble, the Soda City Band, the United States Marine Corps Dirty Boots Brass Band, and the Atlanta Drum Academy.

Spectators can watch from anywhere along the beach between Alder Lane and the Beach House, or catch the finale at Lowcountry Celebration Park. Anyone who can't make it in person can watch a live stream on the Beaufort County Channel. Parking is available at the Coligny Beach parking lot, First Baptist Church, St. Luke's Anglican Church, and USCB's Hilton Head campus, with a shuttle running from USCB between 4:15 and 9:15 PM. The event is free, and it draws one of the biggest crowds of the season for good reason — there's nothing else on the island quite like watching hundreds of lanterns move down the beach after dark.

AN ISLAND TRADITION IN LIGHT

What began as a small community gathering has grown into a signature Hilton Head Island winter night, drawing families, school groups, and first-time visitors down to the same stretch of sand for one evening a year. The Town live streams the parade for anyone who can't be there, but the lanterns are best seen in person, moving slowly against the dark water.

> *"As dusk gives way to night, the soft glow of handmade lanterns transforms the beach into a glowing stream of light, creativity and celebration."*
>
> TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND · LANTERN PARADE

Dining

A few local favorites for the winter season, from fresh catches to European-influenced baked goods.



Fresh, local ingredients set the tone for winter dining on the island.

Lulu's Kitchen

Step inside Lulu's Kitchen and you'll find a bright, eclectic dining room built around fresh, high-quality ingredients. Each dish is crafted with care, from bold, inventive plates to lighter, more refined ones — a menu built for exploring rather than settling on the usual order. Seasonal specials keep fine dining approachable here, even on a weeknight.

The Old Oyster Factory

Every table at the Old Oyster Factory looks out over the water, with a sunset view that's hard to beat from the oyster bar or the dining room. It's home to one of the island's largest selections of oysters on the half shell, alongside coastal-inspired dishes served indoors or out. Winter is peak oyster season on Hilton Head, which makes this the moment to order the dish the restaurant is named for.

The French Bakery

The French Bakery bakes its breads and pastries from scratch every morning, sourcing ingredients the way a real European bakery would. Fresh salads, sandwiches, and entrées round out the menu alongside a coffee list worth lingering over. It's the kind of stop that turns a quick errand into a slower morning.

> *"Amazing lunch options — sandwiches, fancy salads, seafood — huge servings, everything was fresh and delicious. Very affordable upscale-ish lunch."*
>
> ON LULU'S KITCHEN

SEASONAL GOLF

Golf

Heron Point at Sea Pines

2007
COURSE REDESIGNED

18
HOLES, PUBLIC COURSE

Intermediate
RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVEL





Heron Point carries the signature of golf's late, legendary architect Pete Dye, who reshaped the course into its current form in 2007. The layout began in 1963 as Sea Marsh Golf Course, designed by George Cobb; Dye's redesign reworked the fairways, added his trademark mounding, and built in the risk-reward decisions he was known for on holes short and long.

Swales and mounds frame every target area, and the fairways move toward and away from hazards in a way that rewards a thoughtful shot over a long one. At a par of 72, it's a course built to test intermediate and experienced players without ever feeling unfair.

Heron Point is managed by Sea Pines and open to the public, so a tee time here is easy to book alongside a stay in the community. After the round, Sea Pines' shopping center is steps away, with a number of highly rated restaurants for dinner.

Time it right and you can walk from the eighteenth green straight into Harbour Town Lights, on display nightly from November 27th through January 1st.

"This course is truly a gem. The staff was super friendly, and the course itself is absolutely beautiful."

HERON POINT · SEA PINES

SELECT SEASONAL EXPERIENCE

Christmas in South Beach

The Salty Dog Cafe · South Beach Marina

Coastal Village
NEW ENGLAND–STYLE HOLIDAY DECOR

Nightly
LIVE MUSIC, S'MORES, SANTA'S ARRIVAL

All Ages
CRAFTS, COCOA & WATERFRONT SHOPPING



A COASTAL VILLAGE, DRESSED FOR THE SEASON

Christmas in South Beach turns Hilton Head's South Beach Marina into a coastal New England fishing village dressed for the holidays. The centerpiece is a twenty-foot Christmas tree powered by solar and wind energy, anchoring a Christmas Village that includes a nativity scene near the courtyard and a run of intricate holiday display trains. It's the kind of scene that rewards a slow walk rather than a quick pass-through, with something new to notice at every turn of the marina.

SANTA & S'MORES, AND MORE

Saturdays bring the season's signature event, Santa & S'mores, with fire pits for roasting marshmallows, live waterfront music, and a complimentary hot cocoa bar for the kids. Santa makes his own entrance by boat, cruising the marina on his floating sled. Adults have their own corner of the evening too, with heated outdoor bar seating, seasonal cocktails, and a Holiday Happy Hour. The marina's boutiques and galleries stay open for last-minute gifts, and The Salty Dog keeps the spirit going year-round with themed events like Christmas in July.

"It truly felt like a coastal winter wonderland, and we're already talking about making this our new annual Christmas tradition!"

THE SALTY DOG CAFE · SOUTH BEACH MARINA

BOOK DIRECT · NO PLATFORM FEES

Signature Winter Stays

A few of the homes we recommend for a winter visit to the island.



24 Cartgate

5 Bed · 4.5 Bath · 22 Guests

Escape to this pet friendly retreat in Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort, where unforgettable memories await for groups of up to 22 guests. With a private pool and spa, a spacious backyard, and a cozy loft complete with a foosball table and video console, this home offers something for every member of the family.



9 Hilton Head Beach Villa

3 Bed · 3 Bath · 10 Guests

Tucked into South Forest Beach, and just a short walk from the beach.



678 Mariners Way

2 Bed · 2 Bath · 4 Guests

Wake up steps from the marina, lighthouse, and shops of Harbour Town.



265 Turnberry

2 Bed · 2 Bath · 5 Guests

Golf course views and morning coffee on your private patio at this beautiful two story villa.

8 Juniper

4 Bed · 3 Bath · 10 Guests

Welcome to 8 Juniper, a stunning single level Hilton Head Island retreat. Designed for unforgettable group getaways, elevated family vacations, and relaxing coastal escapes, this beautifully updated home blends spacious indoor living with exceptional outdoor spaces, creating the perfect setting for making lasting memories together.



LOOKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE

Host & Home manages homes across Sea Pines, Palmetto Dunes, Shipyard, and beyond — from cozy villas to expansive family retreats. See page 9 to connect with our local team and find the fall stay that fits.

READY TO BOOK

Plan Your Next Stay

Host & Home offers a higher standard of stay: comfort, care, and craft; thoughtfully prepared for your arrival. Our team excels in providing high-end customer service and takes a proactive approach to ensure every detail is meticulously handled.

Drawing from hands-on experience in the 5-star hotel, real estate, and vacation rental industries, we've taken best practices to the next level, delivering a stay that feels effortless, local, and genuinely well cared for.

Everything Handled Before You Arrive

This is where a thoughtfully hosted stay makes the difference — more than just a place to sleep for the week. With Host & Home, the details are handled before you ever arrive: local support, a well-prepared home, and a Hilton Head experience that starts long before check-in.

LOCAL TEAM · 5-STAR EXPERIENCE · A BETTER WAY TO STAY



Find Your Winter Stay on Hilton Head Island

Ready for a better way to settle into the Lowcountry? Connect with us and book direct to start planning your coastal getaway.

Host & Home

LUXURY VACATION RENTALS

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