

# A Weekend Cruise from Georgia to north Florida

Extend your summer just a little longer **By Bridget Furlong**

This fall, when you are missing the long warm days of summer, get away and experience the beauty and relaxed attitude of the southern east coast. Use our Weekend Warrior guide to coast through three exciting cities that have something for everyone: whether you are a beach bum, a nature enthusiast or a night owl. Savannah, a city bursting with southern charm, is a great place to start your weekend. Stroll through the 150-year-old-city squares and stop to people watch under the shade of Spanish moss. The natural beauty of Jekyll Island makes it unsurprising that it held the summer homes of the elite families of early 20th century. The elegant and playful mood of the past can be felt when walking around the grounds of the Jekyll Island Club, where Daisy Buchanan likely spent her winters. Fernandina Beach is a place to really relax. This largely resort-free town attracts visitors with its white sand, uncrowded beaches and unique atmosphere. Grab your family and get ready for a weekend in the sun!

## Day 1: Soak Up Southern Charm in Savannah

Begin your weekend getaway in a city famous for its hospitality: Savannah, Georgia. A especially welcoming marina is the Hyatt Savannah Marina (912-238-1234). Upon first walking in, the spacious lobby lets you get a real feel for the ambiance of the natural beauty of Georgia's coastal landscape. The location of the Hyatt is perfect. Situated on the 12-block River Street, boaters are able to jump right into the Savannah lifestyle. Ready for a drink? Right across the street from the Hyatt is the Moon River Brewing Company (912-447-0943).

Dock your boat and head to River Street, a truly unique strip with lots of shops, the Savannah Candy Kitchen (1-800-443-7884), and close to ten restaurants with seafood and bar food. Locals love The Shrimp Factory for delicious seafood and shrimp galore (912-236-4229), the Olympia Café for Greek (912-233-3131), and The Chart House for great seafood and steak, where dinner prices average about



<http://www.savannahvisit.com/> Savannah Tourism

Savannah's downtown area is the nation's largest National Historic Landmark District

Savannah hosts the largest St. Patrick's Day Festival in the South and is home to the "To Go Cup" (a cocktail to take with you as you barhop).





Historic District Mansion, Savannah's downtown area is the nation's largest National Historic Landmark District

\$40 a person (912-234-6686). After dinner go on a river boat ride, a trolley tour, or a ghost tour. Check out [www.riverstreetsavannah.com](http://www.riverstreetsavannah.com) for more information.

Only five blocks from Hyatt is Broughton Street where visitors can get a real flavor of the culture of Savannah. There is an array of new art galleries, clothing boutiques, and trendy clothing stores like Urban Outfitters (912-238-5606) and Marc Jacobs (912-234-2800).

Next check out Zunzi's, a necessary stop for lunch (912-443-9555) and only three blocks south of Broughton Street. Owned and operated by a couple from South Africa, this homemade traditional food is absolutely amazing and averages \$6 per person. They bake and sell all their own breads, so take one for the trip to Jekyll Island.

## Day 2: Bask in the Jewels of Jekyll Island

Approximately 65 nautical miles from Savannah, Jekyll Island is an easily accessible jewel on the Intracoastal Waterway. We recommend Jekyll Harbor Marina (912-635-3137) for a great place to dock and also home to SeaJay's Restaurant (912-635-3200) with top-notch seafood for a relatively inexpensive price. The Jekyll Harbor Marina provides courtesy vehicle rides and bikes to all boaters, which makes getting around the Island very easy.

The beauty of Jekyll Island is in the marshes, beaches, and Victorian architecture, but the convenience of



Sea grass blows on Jekyll Island Beach, a popular family trip.

the Island's small size makes everything accessible to boaters. Locals swear by Zachry's Restaurant (912-635-3128) located on the east side of the Island.

## “Jekyll Island is a playground for the public”

Visit the beautiful beaches and go fishing during the day, and make sure to stop at the beachside shop Zach's Eats and Treats (912-635-2040) for made to order subs, sandwiches and pizza, not to mention the delicious ice cream. The Riverview Historical Area, less than a mile from the marina, has great shopping and holds the Jekyll Island Museum (912-635-4036) where visitors can really immerse them-

selves in the rich history of the Jekyll Island Club-era through an 8 minute movie, photographs, and tours of the district. Interested in marine life? Famous for its turtle nesting and hatching every summer, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center is open year-round and is not to be missed. Jekyll Island is a playground for the public with more activities than any visitor could fit in one trip!

### Day 3: Discover the history and fun in Fernandina Beach

Only 26 nautical miles ahead lay historic Fernandina Beach on the picturesque Amelia Island. This beach town is known for its laid-back attitude and outdoorsy feel. Marinalife members' favorite place to dock is Fernandina Harbour Marina (904-491-2090) because of its convenient docking, friendly staff and close proximity

to downtown Fernandina. Don't miss Centre Street, which has art studios and quaint cafes a plenty to keep you and your family busy for hours.

After docking take advantage of Brett's Waterway Café (904-261-2660) located in the marina. Although a little pricey (entrees average about \$30) the seafood is the best in town. The Palace Saloon (904-491-3332) is the oldest saloon in Florida and has excellent burgers and fun nightlife with live music every night. Rumor has it there is a ghost of the late bartender “Uncle Charlie” who resides in the saloon and is always ready to serve a Pirate's Punch.

Before departing, check out the Florida House Inn (800-258-3301), Florida's oldest surviving hotel whose past guests include Ulysses S. Grant, the Rockefellers and the Carnegies. The family-style Southern cuisine will keep your taste buds singing along with the live bluegrass music that plays every Monday night. Every Sunday has Shag dancing (a type of swing dance) with lessons. Visit [www.floridahouseinn.com](http://www.floridahouseinn.com) for more information.

A great place to spend the day is Fort Clinch State Park (904-277-7274) and is one of the most well-preserved 19th century forts in the United States and well worth the two mile taxi ride. Hikers and bikers can enjoy the six mile trail that runs through the park, sunbathers can relax on the beach, and fishers can cast their lines from the pier.

Visit [www.marinalife.com/cruises/www\\_georgia](http://www.marinalife.com/cruises/www_georgia) for more recommendations and navigational screen shots. [m/](#)

Fort Clinch State Park stays well preserved and is located only 2 miles from the Fernandina Harbour Marina.



Centre Street in downtown Fernandina Beach is lined with quaint shops and historic buildings.

