


[ DAY TRIP ]

# HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Explore this marshy island, just 30 minutes from Montage Palmetto Bluff,  
with tennis great Stan Smith.

BY SUE G. COLLINS

Marshlands on the way to the  
beach at Hilton Head Island



Known for its 12 miles of expansive sandy beaches and world-class golf courses, Harbour Town Lighthouse and Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge salt marsh, Hilton Head Island, nestled along the South Carolina coast, is full of adventures for the whole family.

That is why tennis great Stan Smith has made Hilton Head Island his home for the past for 47 years, still playing and coaching at Sea Pines Racquet Club when he's not having fun on the beach with his 13 grandchildren.

"My kids grew up here in Hilton Head and we still enjoy doing all the tourist things—biking the trails, going to the beach, getting out

on the water," says Smith, who travels the world with his Georgia-based company, Stan Smith Events, and with Adidas, where his eponymous leather tennis shoe still outsells newer brands. He has also donated his time and resources to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Lowcountry for more than 20 years, helping at-risk youth reach high school graduation, plan for the future, build community and become better citizens through a healthy lifestyle, words and deeds.

*Montage Magazine* asked him to share an itinerary for a perfect day in Hilton Head Island, a half-hour's drive from Montage Palmetto Bluff.



Clockwise from above:  
a street in Harbour Town;  
Stan Smith at Smith  
Stearns Tennis  
Academy at Sea Pines  
Racquet Club; the beach  
at Hilton Head Island

**BREAKFAST**

Take the boat over, drive or bike to Palmetto Bay Sunrise Cafe, a favorite local hangout. Sit outside on the covered porch or at the counter and watch them flip pancakes or order the Strata, a layered egg, onion, sausage and cheese baked dish with house-made chili sauce. Open for breakfast and lunch. (palmettobaysunrisecafe.com)

**MORNING TENNIS**

Take a lesson with Smith or one of the coaches at the Smith Stearns Tennis Academy where Smith, former USTA director of coaching and No. 1 player in the world, and B.J. Stearns, a former top nationally and internationally ranked player and the academy’s director, line up camps, clinics,

exhibitions and classes. Located at Sea Pines Racquet Club. (seapines.com)

**HIT THE TRAILS**

“Hilton Head is one of the most bike-friendly places you’ll find,” Smith says. Rated as a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists, wheel your way through 60 miles of multiuse trails and make your way to South Beach for an ice cream at The Salty Dog Cafe, where more than 50 flavors are scooped daily. (saltydog.com)

**LUNCH**

From the racquet club, walk to Fraser’s Tavern for lunch. Fraser’s Tavern overlooks Atlantic Dunes





by Davis Love III and Heron Point by Pete Dye golf courses with wide views of the greens from the restaurant's shady porch. (seapines.com)

**AFTERNOON AT THE STABLES**

Meet the resident goats, cows, miniature donkeys, potbellied pigs and alpacas at Lawton Stables. Trail rides (8 years and up) with a guide sharing Hilton Head Island culture, history and wildlife meander through trails, forests and lakes in over 600 lush acres of the Sea Pines Forest Preserve. Pony rides are available for riders 7 years and younger. Reservations required for trail rides; call 843-671-2586.

**OR ... AN AFTERNOON ON THE WATER**

“My daughter and her husband met while stand-up paddleboarding and like to head out on the Calibogue Sound or try fishing from a SUP on the Broad River, venturing into the inlets and quiet waters.” Call Saltmarsh Paddle Tours and talk to owner and native Dean Windley. He will take you on a tour or send you on your way and recommends being on the water at low tide when dolphins and birds are feeding and active. Expect

to see manatees, shrimp, waterfowl and stingrays. Self-guided tours, SUP and kayak rentals are available on the quiet Broad River. (saltmarshpaddle.com)

Above: the bridge to Hilton Head Island Harbor; below: biking on trails to and from South Beach



TOP: HELOSCHNIE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; BOTTOM: ROB TIPTON



Left: The Salty Dog Cafe at Hilton Head Island Marina; right: the lighthouse at dusk



## DINNER

At the end of the day, Hilton Head glows under a Lowcountry sunset (around 5:30 p.m. in January). Here are a few of Smith's favorite dinner spots:

### RED FISH OF HILTON HEAD

"Sit outdoors and check out the extensive wine list," Smith says. Red Fish specializes in seafood, steaks, fresh local fruit and vegetables and Lowcountry specialties. Enjoy homegrown produce from Bear Island Farm, plus an extensive wine list that has won Wine Spectator's "Best of Award of Excellence." ([redfishofhiltonhead.com](http://redfishofhiltonhead.com))

### CQ'S RESTAURANT, HARBOUR TOWN

"I've been going to this classic place for 40 years," Smith says. Wander over before dinner to shop, then stay for Grand Marnier Shrimp and Grits and the daily warm bread pudding. ([cqsrestaurant.com](http://cqsrestaurant.com))

### MICHAEL ANTHONY'S

Check out this restaurant, cooking school and Italian market owned by Hilton Head Island residents Tony and Becky Fazzini. ([michael-anthonys.com](http://michael-anthonys.com)) **M**

## SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

A collection of unique tours, performances and demonstrations are available to take a deeper dive into the Lowcountry, from nature, cuisine and mixology to history and culture, including an up-close look at the Gullah community as it comes to life. Here are a few to choose from:

### Beyond the Battlefield: Hilton Head Island in Civil War

From 1861 to 1865, decades before the golf courses, resorts and modern development, Hilton Head Island was home to thousands of soldiers, slaves and civilians. At the Coastal Discovery Museum, visitors can learn more about the experience that soldiers, former slaves and civilians had here during the Civil War. Through first person accounts and historic photographs, guests learn about the Battle of Port Royal, the foundation of freedom for Lowcountry slaves, the strategic importance of Hilton Head Island and a day in the life of a soldier. (70 Honey Horn Drive, Hilton Head Island)

### Gullah Heritage Trail Tours

Tour guides, all of whom are of Gullah heritage and who were born and raised on Hilton Head Island, share their expertise with visitors about the Gullah people, who are known for preserving more of their African linguistic and cultural heritage than any other African-American community in the United States. An authentic culture of the Sea Islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida prior to and since the Civil War, Gullah is the West African-based system of traditions, art forms and family life that has survived centuries of slavery and more than a century of free lifestyle. (70 Honey Horn Drive, Hilton Head Island)

### Mitchelville

This journey begins in Mitchelville's slave era at the Sidebar dock where the slave ships arrive. Here guests will come face to face with an actor playing Harriett Tubman, an American abolitionist, humanitarian and armed scout and spy for the U.S. Army during the Civil War. Tubman will explain how after the slaves were freed, Mitchelville (named after General Mitchel in 1862) served as the "rehearsal for Reconstruction," a radical experiment that addressed the former slaves' longings for their own land and independence. While Mitchelville once had over 3,000 residents, after the Union army left the area in 1868, residents eventually moved inland, but their connection to the town endures through their descendants and the impact of the first taste of African American independence. For more signature experiences visit [hiltonheadisland.org](http://hiltonheadisland.org).