



Vince Graham's Downtown Charleston Walking Tour

As an aficionado of the public realm –the shared places we own in common like streets and parks - I am as interested in the spaces between buildings as I am in the buildings themselves. The oldest area of Charleston was laid out in 1680 and comprises 62 acres bounded by East Bay, Water, Meeting, and Cumberland Streets. Originally, this part of the city was surrounded by walls, which were dismantled in the 1720s. The area, along with its 18th century annexations, has the feel of a medieval European city, but with a tropical flair. This tour will send you through several of Charleston's memorable parks, as well as its most charming, "not to be missed" streets, alleys, lanes, and hidden paths. A leisurely pace will probably take 2-3 hours or so. By no means is this inclusive, but will offer a great tour of the best architecture of Charleston.

Best to have map in hand as a navigational aid.

Begin at corner of Meeting and Market Street, head east down Market Street.

Three blocks, then right on East Bay Street.

Three blocks, then left on Vendue Range, heading toward the Cooper River and large fountain.

Pass fountain and take a right onto path along water's edge.

Path will intersect with Concord Street. Walk along Concord and take a right on Exchange Street.

Two blocks then right on East Bay Street.

Three blocks and cross East Bay Street. Head down Unity Alley.

Left on State Street.

Right on Broad Street.

Left on Church Street.

Left on Elliott Street.

Two blocks, then right on East Bay Street. The colorful town homes on the right on the next two blocks comprise "Rainbow Row".

Right on Tradd Street.

Left on Church Street.

Left on Longitude Lane (A narrow pedestrian lane – don't miss it)

Right on East Bay Street.

Right on Stoll's Alley (A narrow pedestrian lane – don't miss it)

Left on Church Street.

Left on Water Street.

Cross East Bay and walk up stairs going right on sidewalk adjacent to waterfront ("the Battery")

Walk around the point of the Battery to Murray Boulevard.

Cross Murray Boulevard heading to the Gazebo in "White Point Garden".

Walk around gazebo and take a left onto South Battery Street.

Right on King Street.

Left on Lamboll Street.

Right on Legare (pronounced "Legree") Street.

Cross Tradd Street (road jogs, but is still Legare).

Right on Broad Street.

Right on Orange.

Left on Tradd

Right on King

Three blocks then left on Lamboll

Right on Meeting Street.

Left on South Battery.

Left on Church Street.

Two blocks then left on Water

Right on Meeting

Two blocks then right, heading east down a narrow alley called “Ropemakers Lane”.

Ropemakers Lane winds its way into a grassy parking lot. Continue east through the parking lot and look for a gate. The gate marks a public path. Open and walk through to Church Street.

Left on Church

Left on St. Michael’s Alley

Right on Meeting to Broad (this intersection is known as the Four Corners of Law: Federal Courthouse, County Courthouse, Charleston City Hall, St. Michael’s Church (God’s law).

Note: there are public rest rooms on the ground floor of City Hall. If you have time, go up to the third floor to check out Charleston’s City Council Chambers.

Right on Broad.

Cross Broad Street and go left through Washington Park.

Right on Chalmers Street.

Left on Church Street. Just before large church that juts out into street (St. Phillip’s) is a little black gate on the left with a sign that says “Pirate’s Courtyard”. This is a public way, open gate and walk down pedestrian alley, through small courtyard and around what looks like private courtyard walls (don’t worry, it’s public), you will end up on Queen Street. Go right on Queen.

Two blocks then right on King Street.

2-3 blocks then right on Market Street.

One block back to your starting point.

Some good places for libations along the route...

Rooftop bar at Vendue Inn

Another great rooftop bar (better views) is at top of **Market Pavilion Hotel**

(southwest corner of Market and East Bay Street)

Blind Tiger Pub (try courtyard in back)

Charleston Beer Exchange (not a bar, but offers one of the most outstanding selections on the east coast)

The bar at **Carolina’s Restaurant** (Exchange Street)

The bar at the **Mills House Inn** (Meeting Street between Chalmers and Queen Street)

Club Habana (Cigar bar on Meeting Street between Chalmers and Queen Street)

The bar at **Peninsula Grill Restaurant** (Market Street)

The bar at **Charleston Grill Restaurant** – good jazz in evenings (Market and Meeting Street)

The bar at **High Cotton Restaurant**

The bar at **McCrary’s Restaurant**

Other places to explore include:

Ansonborough (first extension of city plan - bounded by East Bay, Market, Meeting, and Calhoun Streets).

The College of Charleston (area surrounding the “Cistern”)

Best shopping is on King Street between Market and Calhoun.

There’s also some funky shops/restaurants in the “Upper King” section north of Calhoun Street.

Marion Square.

Area surrounding **Colonial Lake.**

Favorite downtown restaurants (not in any order):

Fig

Pane e Vino (sit in courtyard if weather is nice).

McCrary’s

Carolina’s

La Fourchette

Peninsula Grill (if you have dinner somewhere else, go there for desert and order the Coconut Cake)

Charleston Grill (great brunch too)

Slightly North of Broad

Lucca

Il Cortile del Re (sit in courtyard if weather is nice)

Fulton Five

Basil (Thai)

Hominy Grill

Monza Pizza (best pizza)

Andolini’s Pizza (Good pizza. Classic college atmosphere)

Five Loaves – inexpensive. Popular with College of Charleston students and locals.

Taco Boy (Food good. Beer cold. Atmosphere fun).

Best Coffee

Hope and Union

City Lights

Kudu