

self guided driving tour of savannah

self guided driving tour of savannah offers an exceptional way to explore the rich history, stunning architecture, and charming streets of one of Georgia's most beloved cities. This comprehensive guide provides travelers with detailed routes, must-see landmarks, and practical tips for navigating Savannah's unique neighborhoods at their own pace. Whether interested in historic squares, coastal views, or local cuisine, a self guided driving tour of Savannah allows visitors to customize their itinerary and delve deeply into the city's cultural heritage. The following sections cover key attractions, suggested routes, parking information, and insider tips to optimize the driving experience. This article aims to help visitors make the most of their Savannah adventure while enjoying the flexibility and comfort of a self-paced excursion. Explore Savannah's iconic locations and hidden gems with confidence on your self guided driving tour of Savannah.

- Planning Your Self Guided Driving Tour of Savannah
- Top Attractions on a Self Guided Driving Tour of Savannah
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Planning Your Self Guided Driving Tour of Savannah

Proper planning is essential to maximize the benefits of a self guided driving tour of Savannah. Understanding the city layout, timing, and points of interest will help create an efficient and enjoyable itinerary. Savannah's historic district is compact yet filled with numerous sites worth visiting, so prioritizing attractions based on personal interests is advisable. Additionally, familiarizing oneself with local traffic laws, parking options, and best times to visit busy areas can enhance the overall experience. Preparation also includes having a reliable GPS or map, comfortable vehicle, and a clear schedule that allows for spontaneous stops.

Choosing the Right Time to Visit

Seasonality affects traffic, weather, and accessibility in Savannah. Spring and fall are considered the best times for a self guided driving tour of Savannah due to mild temperatures and lower humidity. Summer brings higher temperatures and increased tourist traffic, while winter offers fewer crowds but cooler weather. Early mornings and late afternoons are ideal for avoiding peak traffic and enjoying scenic views with softer lighting.

Essential Items to Bring

To ensure a smooth self guided driving tour of Savannah, packing the right essentials is important. These include a charged mobile device with navigation apps, bottled water, comfortable clothing and footwear, a camera for capturing landmarks, and a printed or digital itinerary. Sunscreen and insect repellent are also recommended for outdoor stops along the route.

Top Attractions on a Self Guided Driving Tour of Savannah

Savannah boasts a wealth of historical landmarks, picturesque squares, and cultural sites that are perfect for discovery during a self guided driving tour. The city's unique blend of Southern charm and coastal beauty means there is something for every traveler. Highlighted below are some of the most popular and rewarding destinations to include on your route.

Historic Squares and Parks

Savannah's historic district is known for its 22 public squares, each offering distinct architectural features and green space. Key squares to visit include:

- **Forsyth Park:** The largest park featuring the iconic Forsyth Fountain and walking trails.
- **Johnson Square:** The oldest square with monuments and proximity to City Hall.
- **Madison Square:** Surrounded by historic buildings and the famed Green-Meldrim House.

Architectural and Historical Sites

Driving through Savannah reveals a variety of architectural styles from Colonial to Victorian. Notable sites include:

- **Cathedral of St. John the Baptist:** A stunning example of French Gothic architecture.
- **Wormsloe Historic Site:** Famous for its picturesque oak-lined avenue and colonial ruins.
- **Mercer-Williams House:** Known for its antebellum architecture and literary significance.

Waterfront and Coastal Attractions

The Savannah River waterfront offers scenic views, shopping, and dining opportunities. Points of interest include:

- **River Street:** A lively area with cobblestone streets, shops, and restaurants.
- **Tybee Island:** A short drive east with beautiful beaches and the historic Tybee Lighthouse.

Recommended Driving Routes and Itineraries

Structuring a self guided driving tour of Savannah with well-planned routes can enhance navigation efficiency and sightseeing enjoyment. Below are suggested itineraries tailored to different interests and time constraints.

Historic District Loop

This route focuses on the core historic district, covering major squares and landmarks within a compact area. Starting from Forsyth Park, the loop includes stops at Johnson Square, Madison Square, the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, and River Street. This driving loop is ideal for half-day tours and offers ample photo opportunities and short walking segments.

Extended Coastal and Neighborhood Drive

For visitors with more time, this itinerary extends beyond the historic district to include Tybee Island and nearby neighborhoods such as Ardsley Park and the Victorian District. The drive showcases Savannah's natural beauty, residential architecture, and beachfront attractions. This route typically requires a full day and allows for lunch or dinner stops at local eateries.

Customized Thematic Tours

Self guided driving tours can be tailored based on themes such as architecture, history, or culinary experiences. For example, an architecture-focused tour might prioritize historic homes and churches, while a food-themed drive would highlight popular restaurants and markets. Planning these thematic routes requires research but offers a highly personalized exploration of Savannah.

Parking and Driving Tips in Savannah

Understanding parking options and local driving conditions is critical for a successful self guided driving tour of Savannah. The city's historic district has limited parking, and some streets are narrow or one-way, so preparation is key.

Parking Options

Visitors can find metered street parking, municipal parking garages, and private lots throughout Savannah. Key parking facilities include:

- **City Garage at Ellis Square:** Centrally located with easy access to downtown attractions.
- **Pin Point Heritage Museum Lot:** Offers convenient parking near some historic sites.
- **Metered street parking:** Available but limited; pay attention to time limits and rates.

Driving Regulations and Safety

Adhering to local traffic laws ensures a smooth driving experience. Savannah enforces speed limits, especially in residential and historic areas, and requires seat belt use for all passengers. Be cautious of pedestrians in popular tourist spots and use turn signals when navigating narrow or one-way streets. Using a GPS device helps avoid confusion and detours.

Local Dining and Amenities Along the Route

A self guided driving tour of Savannah is enhanced by access to quality dining and amenities. The city offers a diverse culinary scene ranging from traditional Southern cuisine to international flavors, as well as convenient stops for refreshments and rest.

Popular Restaurants and Cafés

Along driving routes, visitors can find numerous eateries offering authentic Savannah flavors. Recommended dining options include:

- **Traditional Southern Fare:** Featuring dishes like shrimp and grits, fried chicken, and pecan pie.
- **Seafood Restaurants:** Capitalizing on Savannah's coastal location with fresh catches and oyster bars.
- **Cafés and Bakeries:** Ideal for quick stops offering coffee, pastries, and light meals.

Rest Stops and Visitor Centers

Several visitor centers and rest stops are strategically located to provide information, restrooms, and maps. These centers can serve as helpful waypoints during the tour for additional guidance and local insights. Examples include the Savannah Visitor Center near the train station and facilities within Forsyth Park.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the best neighborhoods to explore on a self-guided driving tour of Savannah?

The best neighborhoods to explore include the Historic District, Victorian District, and the waterfront area, each offering unique architecture, parks, and landmarks.

How long does a typical self-guided driving tour of Savannah take?

A typical self-guided driving tour can take anywhere from 2 to 4 hours, depending on how many stops you make and how long you spend exploring each site.

Are there recommended routes for a self-guided driving tour of Savannah?

Yes, popular routes often include stops at Forsyth Park, River Street, Bonaventure Cemetery, and several historic squares such as Chippewa Square and Monterey Square.

What are some must-see landmarks during a self-guided driving tour of Savannah?

Must-see landmarks include Forsyth Fountain, the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, the Savannah Historic District, and the Telfair Museums.

Is parking readily available for a self-guided driving tour in Savannah?

Parking is available but can be limited in the Historic District; using public parking lots or garages and planning your stops can help avoid parking challenges.

Can I use a mobile app or GPS for a self-guided driving tour of Savannah?

Yes, several mobile apps and GPS guides offer curated routes and audio commentary for self-guided tours, enhancing the experience with historical insights.

What is the best time of day to start a self-guided driving tour of Savannah?

Starting early in the morning is ideal to avoid heavy traffic and crowds, especially during peak tourist seasons and weekends.

Are there any safety tips for a self-guided driving tour in Savannah?

Stay aware of local traffic laws, watch for pedestrians in busy areas, and avoid parking in unlit or unfamiliar locations late at night.

Can a self-guided driving tour of Savannah be combined with walking tours?

Absolutely, many visitors drive between major points and then explore certain areas on foot to fully experience Savannah's charming streets and historic sites.

Additional Resources

1. Exploring Savannah: A Self-Guided Driving Tour

This comprehensive guide offers an easy-to-follow driving itinerary through Savannah's most iconic neighborhoods and historic sites. Readers will discover charming squares, antebellum architecture, and hidden gems at their own pace. The book includes detailed maps, suggested stop times, and tips for dining and photography.

2. Savannah by Car: The Ultimate Road Trip Guide

Designed for travelers who prefer the freedom of driving, this book highlights scenic routes and must-see attractions in Savannah and its surrounding areas. It provides insider information on parking, local events, and seasonal highlights to enhance your journey. Ideal for those who want flexibility and a personalized exploration experience.

3. Historic Savannah Driving Tours

Delve into Savannah's rich history with this guide focused on self-guided tours of historic districts and landmarks. Each route is paired with engaging narratives about the city's past, including stories about famous residents and pivotal events. The book is perfect for history buffs who want to explore at their own speed.

4. The Savannah Scenic Drive Handbook

This book showcases the most picturesque drives in and around Savannah, emphasizing natural beauty and cultural points of interest. It includes suggested stops at parks, waterfronts, and quaint towns nearby. Readers will appreciate tips on the best times for sightseeing and photography.

5. Self-Guided Savannah: Discover Southern Charm by Car

Experience the charm of Savannah through curated driving tours that highlight the city's unique blend of Southern hospitality and historic allure. The guidebook offers detailed directions, points of interest, and recommendations for local eateries and shops. It's an excellent resource for independent travelers seeking an authentic experience.

6. Savannah in a Day: A Driving Tour Guide

Ideal for visitors short on time, this concise guide provides a well-planned driving route to cover Savannah's top attractions in a single day. It balances sightseeing with opportunities for breaks and meals, ensuring a comfortable pace. The book also includes practical advice on traffic and parking.

7. *Ghosts and Gardens: A Savannah Driving Adventure*

Combine eerie tales with stunning garden tours in this unique driving guide. Explore Savannah's haunted locations alongside its famous historic gardens, all mapped out for easy navigation. The book offers historical context and spooky stories to enrich your driving experience.

8. *The Art Lover's Savannah: A Self-Drive Tour*

Celebrate Savannah's vibrant arts scene with a driving tour that visits galleries, murals, and public art installations. This guidebook highlights creative hotspots and provides background on local artists and art history. It's perfect for travelers interested in culture and visual arts.

9. *Family Fun in Savannah: A Self-Guided Driving Tour*

Tailored for families, this guide features child-friendly stops and activities suitable for all ages. It includes parks, interactive museums, and casual dining options along driving routes that are easy to follow. The book aims to make exploring Savannah enjoyable and stress-free for everyone.

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