

More of Hilton Head Island: The Rest of the Island!

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Last week Sue introduced us to [Disney's Hilton Head Island Resort](#), this week she takes us on a tour of the rest of the island!

Just off the coast of South Carolina there is a small island called Hilton Head Island. Surely you've heard of it? It's small, only 21 miles by 5 miles, but it's teeming with activity, fun, and pure enjoyment!

My husband and I were lucky enough to spend five days there this past summer. We booked our vacation at Disney's Hilton Head Resort, one of the flagship properties in the DVC family. We had been to Hilton Head briefly in the past as we passed through on our drive home from Florida, but we never really took the time to enjoy the area. This time, we would make sure that we tasted all that Hilton Head had to offer.

I think the best way to approach a Hilton Head vacation is to decide what you want to do. While it's not as labor intensive as planning a Walt Disney World vacation, there are so many things to see and do that you need to go in with a plan.

If dining is your thing, there is no shortage of restaurants in the area. They range from your run of the mill fast food places to chains like Outback and Panera Bread as well as locally-owned favorites. You can get fresh seafood, prime steak, or just about any other type of food you like. You can dine outdoors at Scott's Fish Market, or hear the story of Jake at [The Salty Dog Cafe](#). Whatever you are in the mood for, Hilton Head has the place for you.

If you like shopping, you don't need to go off the Island; with ONE exception! Hilton Head has plenty of great shops, from fun places featuring local artisans and jewelry to gift and clothing shops just brimming with fun beach themed merchandise. There is even a Wal-Mart if you've left your toothbrush at home. The Harbourtown area of Sea Pines has lots of eclectic shops designed to delight both young and old. And the one exception? If you travel in season, make sure to take a trip on Thursday afternoon to Bluffton for the local [Farmer's Market](#). Fresh fruit and veggies, live music, and all sorts of treats make for a fun afternoon!

If it's history you are interested in, Hilton Head is brimming with it. Sometimes the thought of a vacation paradise like Hilton Head makes you think of all the fun things and none of the history, but Hilton Head

has an awesome story all its own. Settled by William Hilton in 1663, he brought the first taste of plantation life to the Island and started the rich traditions that live on to this day. It took until 1956 for the first resort to be built, and the rest, as they say, is history. There are tours available that highlight the history, including the Gullah culture, which are such a vibrant part of this island.

Of course, Hilton Head is indeed an island, and as such, is surrounded by water and natural beauty. If it's water sports or activities you are looking for, you have come to the right place! You can start at the [Coastal Discovery Museum](#), which spotlights the environmental landscape, and go from there. There are dolphin cruises, sunset cruises, and dinner cruises. You can go fishing, sailing, kayaking, or rent a yacht. There is a lighthouse to climb for a view of the Harbortown area. And there are beaches. 12 miles of pristine beaches…all public! However, access is private in some places. The town of Hilton Head provides access at many locations, [listed right on their website](#). Some of the beaches are even wheelchair accessible.

And let's not forget about golf! Hilton Head's most famous sport is probably golf, and you will have 15 beautifully polished public courses to choose from as well as many private courses! Some offer stunning vistas of the Atlantic Ocean as you tee off. All provide a challenge to your skill level for days of enjoyment. And if you'd rather play tennis, there are over 350 courts on the island!

Perhaps relaxing is more your style. Take a day and pamper yourself at one of the many spas available on the island. From massage therapy to a facial to a full spa treatment, you can have it all.

We decided that good food, good drink, relaxing and some local flair were in our travel plans. We ate at several local places, played miniature golf and saw a movie. We climbed the lighthouse and shopped at the Farmer's market. We visited the old church in Bluffton and had a night cap in Shelter Cove. We swam in the pool at our resort and walked on the beach. All in all, we had a wonderful trip. Hilton Head is more than a vacation destination…it's a state of mind waiting for you to discover it!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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