



HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

The Charleston Festival

A Fundraiser for Historic Charleston Foundation

(previously the Festival of Houses and Gardens)

2026 Festival Dates: March 16 – April 11, 2026

SALES POLICY AND FESTIVAL GUIDE

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Thank you for your patronage of The Charleston Festival, Historic Charleston Foundation's largest annual educational and fundraising program. Your ticket purchases support the preservation, advocacy, and education initiatives of HCF. We look forward to hosting you during the Festival.

Please bookmark this guide or consider printing it for future reference during your visit to Charleston. This is your "what you need to know before you go" guide. It answers questions about tickets, event venues, parking, and more!

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I. SALES POLICIES

- All ticket purchases are final. (See below if you are unable to use your purchased tickets.)
- Your confirmation (email receipt/acknowledgment) will arrive in your inbox* soon after your order is completed. (*Check your spam, junk, or promotions folders if you do not receive the confirmation in your inbox immediately after you've completed an order.)
- Tickets are not mailed in advance. Your email receipt confirmation is your proof of purchase for admission for all non-TOUR events and to pick up TOUR credentials at the ticket office.
- TOUR ticketholders must pick up TOUR credentials and maps at the Festival Ticket Office* any time beginning or after March 16th. You will be required to show your confirmation (email receipt) and a photo ID that matches the name on the confirmation to receive your TOUR credentials and map.

Each person on a TOUR must have valid credentials for admission to tour sites.

* **Exception:** Architectural and Garden Legacy Tour ticketholders will receive tour details and locations via email 7-10 days prior to the tour. Legacy Tour ticketholders do not pick up tour maps at the ticket office. The email will provide detailed instructions about these special tours.

- Ticketholders to all other Festival non-TOUR events (Lectures, concerts, guided walks, demonstrations, workshops, house museum events, etc.) will be asked to present proof of purchase (email receipt/acknowledgment/e-ticket) at the event venue for admission. You do not need to pick up credentials in advance for non-TOUR events.
- If you are unable to use your Festival tickets, you may contact the Festival Ticket Office (TicketOffice@HistoricCharleston.org or 843.722.3405) to activate one of these options:
 - Exchange your unused tickets for another event during the 2026 Festival for an exchange fee of \$10 per ticket plus the higher ticket price difference, contingent on availability and approval. Partial refunds are not given for exchanges to lower-priced tickets.
 - Donate your unused tickets to HCF as a tax-deductible gift. An acknowledgment of your donation will be provided.

II. TICKET OFFICE INFORMATION

- **Address:** Charleston Visitor Center | 375 Meeting Street
(This is the pick-up location for TOUR maps and credentials and for in-person assistance during the Festival in March and April. Parking is available in front of center or in garage.)
- **Dates and Hours of Operation for Ticket Office at Visitor Center:** March 16 – April 11 | Daily 9 am to 5 pm
- **Phone:** (843) 722-3405 (Operational Dec. 1, 2025 – Apr. 11, 2026)
- **Email:** TicketOffice@HistoricCharleston.org
- **Mailing Address:** Historic Charleston Foundation | PO Box 1120 | Charleston, SC 29402

III. FAQ / GENERAL FESTIVAL INFORMATION

- Out of respect for our homeowners and event venues and for the safety of all our guests, volunteers, and staff, pets are not permitted at any events.
- All events occur rain or shine. Please prepare for inclement weather if forecasted and your event is an outside event. Some events may have “rain locations” for inclement weather conditions.
- Charleston is known for its uneven sidewalks and cobblestone streets. We suggest comfortable walking shoes.
- Please remember that Charleston is a living city. Please use the crosswalks to cross. Be mindful of traffic, and do not walk in the streets. Trash receptacles may be found in public areas for your refuse.

Be mindful of noise levels when in residential areas. Do not block driveways or passersby on sidewalks.

- Public bathrooms are not accessible in residential areas.
- **TIP:** Keep your confirmations (email receipts) handy by flagging them in your inbox or moving them all to a separate folder for easy and quick access.

What you need to know about TOURS: (Church Street, Colonial Lake Area, Harleston Village, South Battery, Tradd Street, Beyond the Garden Gates)

- Please present proof of purchase (email receipt/confirmation) and a photo ID to pick up your TOUR map and TOUR credentials from the ticket office at The Charleston Visitors Center, 375 Meeting Street.
- **TIP:** Plan to pick up your TOUR map and credentials well in advance of your tour start time. You may pick up TOUR credentials the day before your tour if convenient. The Visitor Center is NOT close to most tour areas, so you most likely will not be able to walk to the tour area from the ticket pick-up location. Allow for time between picking up tour map and getting to the tour area by 2:00 pm.
- The TOUR map will tell you the addresses of properties to visit on your purchased tour.
- TOURS run between 2:00 and 5:00 pm. You may visit properties in any order you desire during the three-hour tour time. There is not a specific starting place for TOURS.
- Docents lead tours at each property. Look for Street Marshals (volunteers in straw hats typically at street corners) along the tour route for questions or assistance.
- Each person on TOUR must show valid credentials to enter each tour property.
- Tours are designed to provide an engaging experience for adults. Well-supervised children ages six and older are welcomed on the house and garden tours if tickets are purchased for them. Because of the risk to private property and collections, strollers, car seats, backpacks, or children strapped in any manner to an adult are not permitted in private residences on tour.
- Restrooms are NOT available in residential neighborhoods.
- By SC law, photography is NOT allowed on private property without the express written consent of the property owner. No interior photography is permitted.
- Out of courtesy to our hosts and other guests, please refrain from cell phone usage while on tour.
- Comfortable, flat walking shoes are strongly encouraged. They are safer and better for walking on uneven sidewalks and cobbled streets and will also help protect the floors of the historic homes.
- Large pocketbooks, backpacks, or totes are not permitted in the private residences on tour.
- Guests may bring capped water bottles on tour for rehydrating between properties.
- Tours are conducted rain or shine, so please be prepared if inclement weather is forecasted.

- Private, historic homes on tour are unable to accommodate wheelchairs. Often, guests will need to be able to use stairs to enter and view properties.

What you need to know about guided walking tours: Morning History Walks, Themed Walking Tours

- Please be prepared to show your email receipt/confirmation.
- Morning History Walking tours conducted by Bulldog Tours depart from 40 East Bay Street, HCF Headquarters, aka Captain Missroon House.
- Most Themed Walking Tours (conducted by Bulldog Tours) also start at 40 East Bay with the exception of the tour named "Crime and Corruption Featuring the Old City Jail" which begins at 188 Meeting Street in front of the City Market.
- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of your tour for check-in so that tours may begin promptly.
- No interiors are included during the Morning History Walks.
- Advance purchase is recommended. We will try to accommodate walk-up purchases but cannot guarantee space due to the number of people allowed per guide as directed by the City of Charleston ordinance.
- We recommend that you wear comfortable walking shoes and bring bottled water.

IV. EVENT LOCATIONS / ADDRESSES / PARKING SUGGESTIONS

EVENT NAME (in alpha order)	VENUE
Afternoon History Walk: Crime & Corruption	Market Hall 188 Meeting Street
Architectural Legacy Tour	Ticketholders will receive email 7-10 days prior to event with meeting place.
Art at Aiken-Rhett House Happy Hour	Aiken-Rhett House 48 Elizabeth Street
Bubbles and Blooms	Nathaniel Russell House Garden 51 Meeting Street
FFT Lectures (Food for Thought)	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
Garden Legacy Tour	Ticketholders will receive email 7-10 days prior to event with meeting place.
Legacy Tour: Ansonborough Experience	Ticketholders will receive email 7-10 days prior to event with meeting place.
LLL - A Charleston Tea Party	St. Johannes Lutheran Church 43 Anson Street
LLL - Lecture: Female Entrepreneurs	American Theater 446 King Street

LLL - Lecture: The Challenges & Successes of Gardening	American Theater 446 King Street
LLL - Music Under the Magnolias	Aiken-Rhett House 48 Elizabeth Street
LLL - Sweetgrass Basket Workshop	Nathaniel Russell House 51 Meeting Street
LLL - The Plantation Singers	First Baptist Church 61 Church Street
LLL - Tour of the American College of Building Arts	American College of Building Arts 649 Meeting Street
Morning History Walk	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
Rice and Roots Dining Experience	Nathaniel Russell House 51 Meeting Street
Spring into Festival - Opening Night	Nathaniel Russell House 51 Meeting Street
Sunset Harbor History Tour	10 Wharfside Street
Sunset Social on the Battery	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
Themed Walking Tour: Built to Last	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
Themed Walking Tour: Charleston's Catastrophes	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
Themed Walking Tour: Revolutionary Women	Historic Charleston Foundation 40 East Bay Street
TOUR - Beyond the Gates, Church Street, Colonial Lake, Harleston Village, South Battery, Tradd Street	Pick up TOUR maps and credentials at the Charleston Visitor Center - 375 Meeting Street.

Suggestions for parking and getting around in the city:

- **Ticket Office at the Charleston Visitor Center:** There is metered parking in front of the Visitor Center at 375 Meeting, and additional parking is available at the corner parking garage at 63 Mary Street. See: <https://parkabm.com/facilities/visitors-center-garage-parking/>
- **Parking Garages in Charleston:** <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/1025/Where-to-Park>
- **Parking for events at the Aiken-Rhett House:** Garage at 63 Mary Street
- **Parking for the Harbor History Tour:** The Aquarium Garage at 24 Calhoun Street is the closet garage. There are also metered spaces on Washington Street.
- **Handicapped Parking:** If you have a visible and valid handicapped placard or license plate from any US state, you can park at any metered or timed parking space for free and for any length of time. You cannot park in commercial loading zones.
- Metered street parking on first come, first served basis is also available near some venues.

Ways to move around Charleston:

- Pedicabs available for trips on the Peninsula:
 1. Charleston Bike Taxi: 843-532-8663
 2. Charleston Pedicab: 843-577-7088
 3. Charleston Rickshaw: 843-723-5685
- A free bus service for the downtown area, called DASH, is run by CARTA:
<https://www.ridecarta.com/services/dash/>
- Charleston Yellow Cab: 843-577-6565
- Uber: www.uber.com
- Lyft: www.lyft.com

V. ENHANCE YOUR VISIT TO CHARLESTON:

- Download the HCF Mobile App. Why? [Click here](#) or on the APP icon on our website to download.
 - Excellent content – It's your guide to historic Charleston and HCF's two museum houses.
 - Excellent price – It's free. But hey, feel free to drop a donation in the box so we can keep refreshing the content.
 - Excellent accessibility – It's available on Apple and Android devices!
 - Take the 30-stop audio tour of Charleston.
 - Enjoy stories of over 300 sites in the city.
 - It has over 9 recorded hours of researched and curated history plus photos to bring the stories alive.
- [Tour our house museums](#). Enjoy tours already loaded on the HCF APP with many "extras" to discover. Purchase admission to one house or a discounted ticket to visit both houses.
 - Nathaniel Russell House | 51 Meeting Street
 - Aiken-Rhett House | 48 Elizabeth Street
- Shop Tax-Free:
 - Market Shop of HCF | 188 Meeting Street (in the City Market)
 - <https://shop.historiccharleston.org/>
- ❖ Follow Historic Charleston Foundation on [FACEBOOK](#) and [INSTAGRAM](#)!
- ❖ [Subscribe to our monthly newsletter.](#)
- ❖ Headquarters: Captain Misson House | 40 East Bay Street
- ❖ Mailing Address: PO Box 1120 | Charleston, SC 29402
- ❖ For inquiries unrelated to the Festival: (843) 723.1623 |
NEWS@HISTORICCHARLESTON.ORG