

**TRAVEL**  
Greater Palm  
Springs Oasis

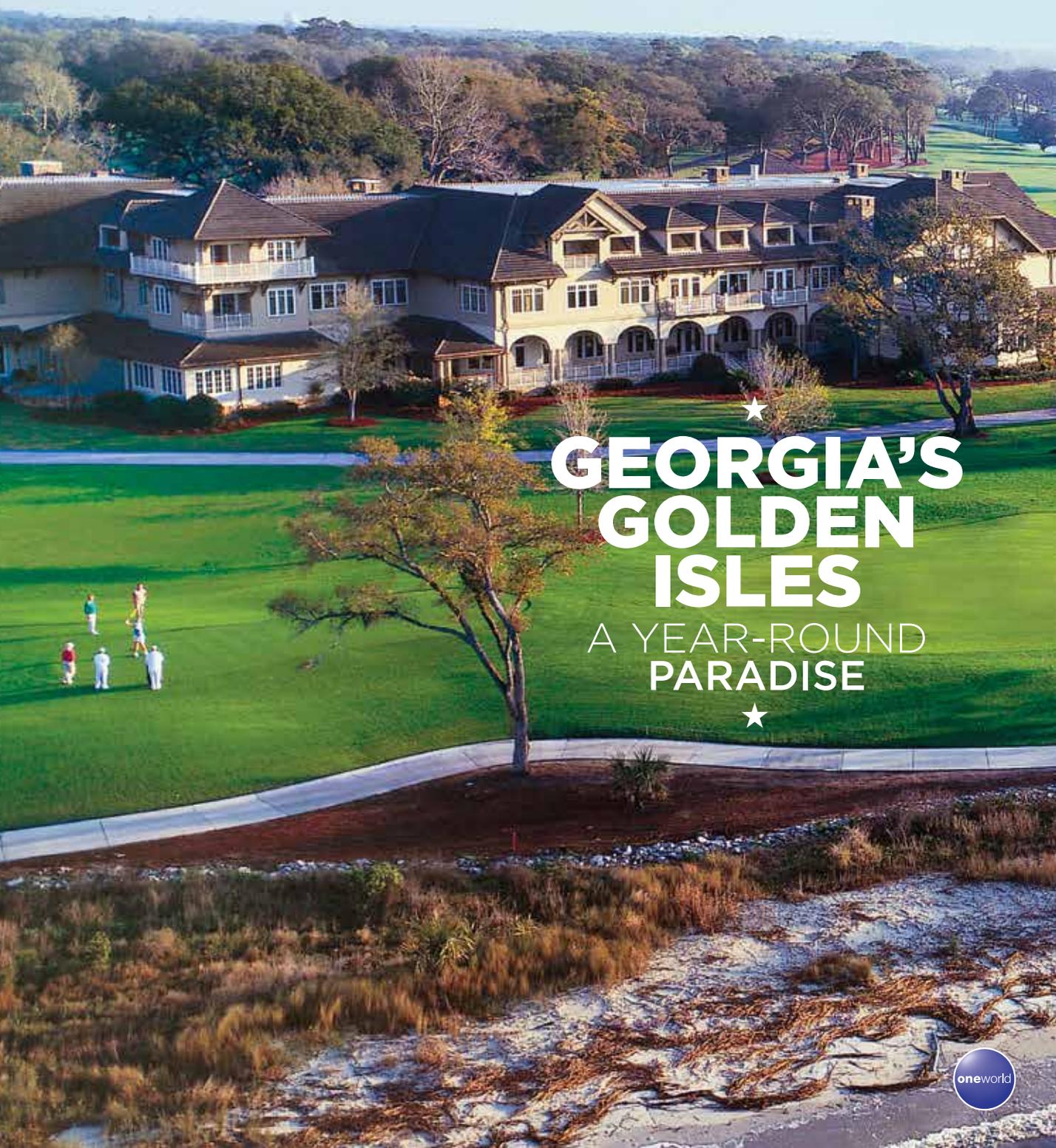
**EDUCATION**  
High Point  
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**HOLIDAYS**  
Myrtle Beach:  
A Coastal Christmas

**EXPLORE**  
Marina Del Rey:  
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# U·S AIRWAYS

Magazine



★  
**GEORGIA'S  
GOLDEN  
ISLES**  
A YEAR-ROUND  
PARADISE



# Sun-kissed Coast

Georgia's Golden Isles shine bright with natural beauty and discovery.

BY SUSAN B. BARNES



**W**hen the sun sets on Georgia's southern coast, it's evident why this area of the state is known as the Golden Isles — the sun's rays cast a glow along the shoreline.



Four islands make up the Golden Isles — St. Simons Island, Little St. Simons Island, Sea Island, and Jekyll Island — and are anchored by the historic port town of Brunswick. Though close geographically, each island has its own particular character and personality.

The largest of the Golden Isles is lovely **St. Simons Island**. Live oaks draped with Spanish moss line the two-lane roads, easing visitors into the island way of life. Golfers can tee off at one of the island's award-winning public courses; nature lovers can enjoy fishing, birding, kayaking, and dolphin watching; history buffs won't want to miss the St. Simons Lighthouse, in operation since 1872, Fort Frederica National Monument, the Maritime Center, and historic Christ Church; and shoppers can head to the Pier Village with its charming boutiques and outdoor eateries. If a day at the four-plus miles of sandy beaches is in store, you're in for a treat: St. Simons Island was awarded America's Favorite Beach Town in America by *Travel + Leisure*.

Accessible only by boat from Hampton

River Marina on St. Simons Island, **Little St. Simons Island** is a private isle that's remained untouched for nearly 100 years. The Lodge was built in 1917 by the owner of Eagle Pencil Company, who bought the 10,000-acre island to harvest its cedar trees. When initial tests indicated that the cedar on the island was not suited for pencils, the owner decided to keep the island as a retreat for family, friends, and colleagues. Today, a maximum of 32 guests can stay on the island in the six cottages, and day trippers can spend a day of exploring in-land, or on the seven miles of private beach.

Besides being a favorite destination for its recreational activities and natural solitude, Little St. Simons Island is a favorite of birders the world over. With such a large and diverse bird population, the Lodge hosts enthusiasts and experts twice a year for week-long seminars during the spring and fall migration seasons.

Just a short drive across the causeway from St. Simons Island is **Sea Island**, home to the world-famous, five-star resort The Cloister at Sea Island and the five-star, five-diamond

The Lodge at Sea Island Golf Club — both of which were named to *Travel + Leisure's* 2014 list of the World's Best Hotels. Surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of Sea Island, guests enjoy luxurious accommodations, amenities, and activities such as tennis, fishing, yachting, and water excursions.

After taking part in the Golf Performance Center's award-winning instruction, golfers will want to hit the championship courses at Sea Island Golf Club, including the Seaside, a links course with ocean views in the tradition of St. Andrews.



**Clockwise from top: Horseback riding, St. Simons Lighthouse, and Davis Love III**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOLDEN ISLES CVA



**Besides being a favorite destination for its natural solitude, Little St. Simons is a favorite of birders the world over.**



**Jekyll Island** is the destination that many of the early 20th-century titans of industry chose as their winter playground. The island is mostly residential, with an array of condominiums and hotels available. The historic district is the site of the elegant Jekyll Island Club Hotel, as well as the “cottages” built by the Vanderbilts, Goodyears, Morgans, and Rockefellers. The hotel and cottages welcome guests year-round. Visitors to Jekyll Island enjoy golf, tennis, beaches, 20 miles of bike paths, mini-golf, and nature tours throughout the year.

The mainland city in the Golden Isles is historic **Brunswick**. Established in 1771, downtown Brunswick is enjoying a renaissance, with its buildings and public squares undergoing renovations. In addition to a variety of residential architectural styles ranging from Queen Anne, Jacobean, Eastlake, Mansard, Gothic, and Italianate, downtown features an eclectic mix of antique and specialty shops, art galleries, restaurants, and theaters.

For a one-of-a-kind experience, board the

*Lady Jane*, the only shrimp boat on the east coast that’s U.S. Coast Guard-certified to carry passengers offshore. Your mission: Cast your nets and try to catch dinner. Not up for doing the work? Stay on the docks and watch the shrimpers unload their catches; it’s a good bet that what you’re seeing will be on tonight’s menus.

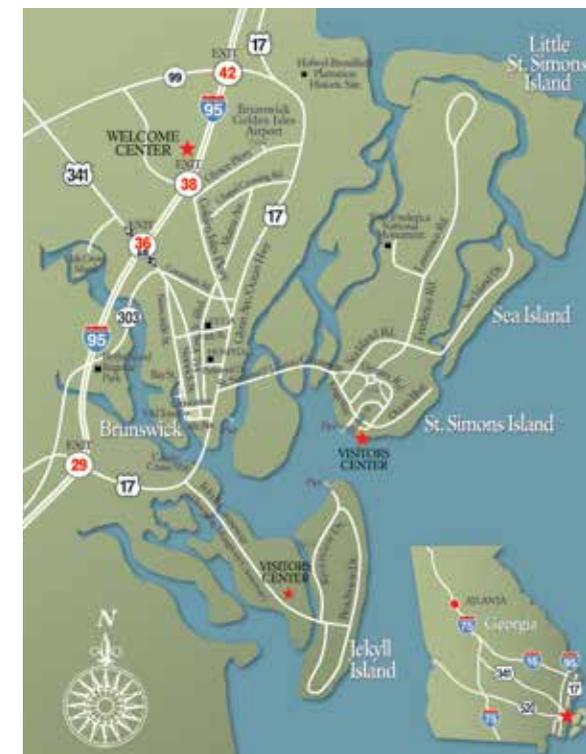
The Golden Isles’ natural coastline offers diverse eco-adventures and wildlife viewing. In the marshlands, you’ll likely see marsh rabbits, great blue herons, and bald eagles, and through the summer months you can spot Loggerhead sea turtles making their nests and hatching on the beaches. In the water, dolphins frolic and pelicans nosedive for a quick meal. Ease into



the environment without disturbing the abundant wildlife, binoculars in hand.

Fun festivals and good food are guarantees for every visitor. Arts and culture, home and garden, and music are celebrated yearlong at festivals throughout the region. And whether your tastes lean toward fine dining or casual paper-plate fare, you’ll find plenty of choices and generous helpings — all served with Southern hospitality.

A visit to Georgia’s Golden Isles is certain to be memorable — and it’s guaranteed that you’ll want to return.



**GETTING THERE** The Golden Isles of Georgia are nearly equidistant from Savannah, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida, both US Airways destinations. For more information, upcoming events, how to get around, and a webcam peek, visit [goldenisles.com](http://goldenisles.com).

**Clockwise from top left: kayaking in salt marshes, barrier island beauty, miles of private beaches, and boats at dusk**