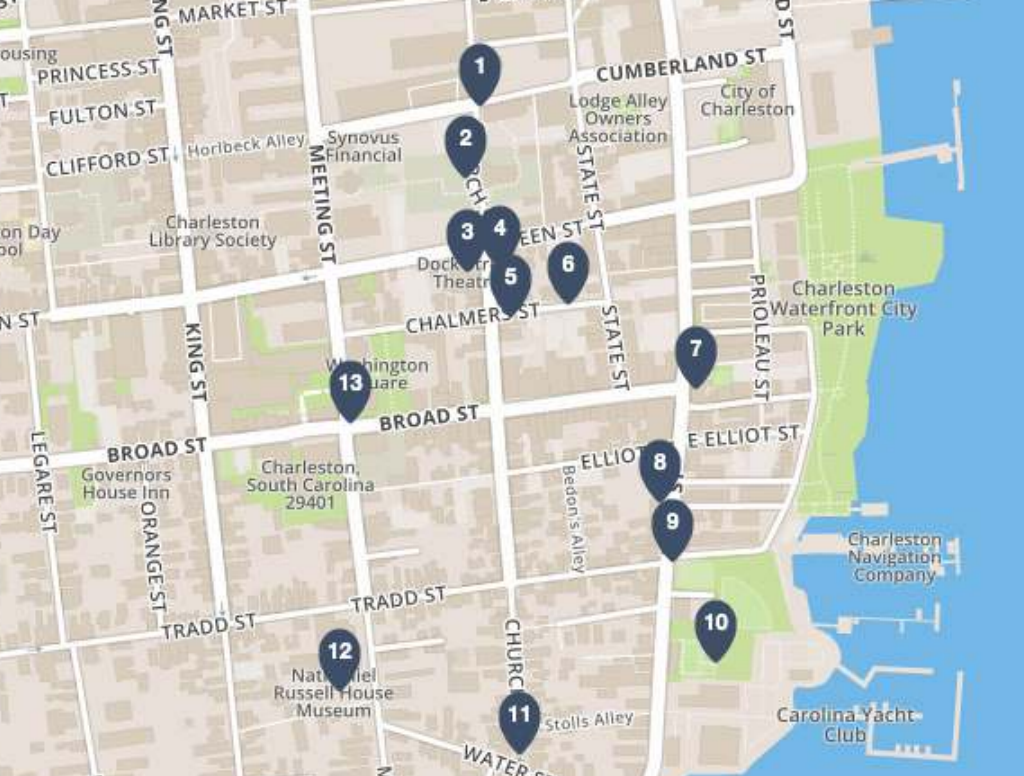




HISTORIC CHARLESTON SELF GUIDED AUDIO TOUR





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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Start | <i>Church & Cumberland Sts</i> |
| 2. St. Philips Church | <i>142 Church St</i> |
| 3. Dock Street Theatre | <i>135 Church St</i> |
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| 5. Pink House | <i>17 Chalmers St</i> |
| 6. Old Slave Mart Museum | <i>6 Chalmers St</i> |
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Introduction



Welcome to Charleston. We're pleased you chose Atlantis Audio Tours and Free Tours by Foot to explore Historic Charleston. We'll start the tour at corner of Church & Cumberland Streets. This tour is about 2 hours long and just over an mile.

Originally named Charles Town, after the reigning English King Charles, Charleston's history dates back more than 300 years. Travel and history enthusiasts consistently rank Charleston in the top 5 most historic cities in the United States. With houses and buildings that have remained intact since before the American Revolution,

Introduction

Charleston allows your imagination to travel back in time to the when stately horse-drawn carriages rode down quaint cobblestone streets. It also is a reminder of America's darker past when slavery was legal and Charleston was one of the biggest hubs of the slave trade. This self-guided tour takes you through a section of the city with a large density of 18th century sites, including those open to the public for free and some that that charge admissions.

Note: It's best to only cross the streets when you have the WALK signal. Vehicular traffic can be very busy in this district, especially first thing in the morning and at lunch.

St. Phillip's Church



The building and graveyard are open to the public

Monday-Friday
10am to 12pm
2pm to 4pm.

If you look down Church Street, you'll see the tower of St. Phillips Church at 154 Church Street, that's our next stop so head that way. You can get a better view if you stand across the street so you can take in the whole building.

The congregation who built the current church grew out of colonial congregation who built a small wooden church in 1681. That wooden church was the first Anglican church south of Virginia.

St. Phillip's Church

As such, St. Phillips is home to the oldest congregation in South Carolina. In the early 18th century, a brick church was built in this site but which burned down in 1835. The church you now see was constructed from 1835 to 1838 by architect Joseph Hyde. Many notable people from the colonial era and post-Revolutionary War years are buried in the graveyard. Several colonial governors are interned there, including Rawlins Lowndes, the governor during the Revolutionary War.

Prominent early Americans are also buried there such as Christopher Gadsden, a general in the Continental Army, Daniel Huger, a member of the Continental Congress, Edward Rutledge, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Charles Pinckney, a signer of the U.S. Constitution.

Dock Street Theatre

Walk down Church Street and cross Queen Street. Look for a building on your right with a green terrance at 135 Church street.



This ornate building with its intricate wrought-iron balcony is now home to the Charleston Stage Company, South Carolina's largest professional theater production company. The current building you see is not the original structure but a hotel built around 1809 that expanded on the buildings already here, one of which was a theatre called the Dock Street Theatre which was located on the Queen Street (formally Dock Street) side of the property.

Dock Street Theatre

The original Dock Street Theatre building from 1730 is believed to have been the first building constructed specifically for theatrical performances in America. In 1736, the grand opening of the theatre featured a production of *The Recruiting Officer* by Irish playwright George Farquhar. Having left acting after accidentally stabbing a fellow actor on stage, Farquhar later served in the army as a recruiter, and drew from those experiences in writing his play.

In 1809 it was expanded on and turned into a hotel, named *The Planter's Hotel*, it is Charleston's last surviving hotel from the antebellum period. At that time the hotel's guests were mainly planters from around the state who came to Charleston for the horse-racing season.

Dock Street Theatre

The hotel was well-known for its good food and delicious alcoholic drinks. Some believe that the South's famous Planter's Punch may have been created here. The building itself has had several additions to it over the years, as is evident from the differences in brick coloration.

During the building's days as the Planter's Hotel, actors performing in nearby theaters routinely stayed at the hotel. Among the guests was Junius Brutus Booth, the father of John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

Huguenot (French Protestant) Church



Turn around to view the white church across the street.

The graveyard belongs to the pink neo-gothic building, the French Huguenot Church. Three church buildings have stood on this site, the current one was built in 1845.

The first church building was completed in 1687, but during the great fire of 1796 was deliberately blown up to create a “firebreak” - which a strip of cleared land made to prevent the spread of a fire.

Huguenot (French Protestant) Church

The second church was built in 1800, but closed in 1823 as the congregation membership dwindled.

Huguenot descendants revitalized the congregation in 1844 and the second church was razed and the current church was built. The church came to be known as the Church of the Tides because Sunday services were held based on the tidal schedule as most in attendance came to town on boats from their up-river homes.

Throughout the 1900s, the church was used periodically by the Huguenot Society of South Carolina for special events. Today's congregation was reestablished in 1983 and is the only French Calvinist congregation in the United States today.

The Pink House



Continue down Church Street and cross Chalmers Street. Turn left at the intersection and keep an eye out for the pink house on your right at 17 Chalmers Street.

Built around 1712, the Pink House is believed to be the second oldest remaining residence in Charleston, though with over 300 years having passed documentation to pinpoint exact dates is hard to find. It also have never been house. Rather it was a tavern and rumored to have housed a brothel in the upper floor.

The Pink House

The Pink House was just one of the structures along cobble-stoned “Chalmers Alley” part of the bawdy, rollicking tavern and bordello district that lay adjacent to the wharfs.

It remained a tavern through the 1700s, when the neighborhood became more residential. Since then it has been a publishing house, a law office and is now an art gallery.

Old Slave Mart Museum



Continue on a few houses and look for the Old Slave Mart Museum on the left.

Closed on Sundays.

Admission Cost varies by age

The building at this site, which now houses the Old Slave Mart Museum, is the only surviving building in South Carolina that had been used as a slave auction gallery.

In the antebellum period, the era leading up to the Civil War, Charleston was a commercial center for the plantation economy. Where there were plantations, there were slaves. The Old Slave Mart was built in 1859 as a result of a city regulation that prohibited public sales of slaves.

Old Slave Mart Museum

The Old Slave Mart made it possible for the slave trade to continue in Charleston now that it had been moved to an indoor private location. It only operated for four years, closing its doors in 1863 during the Civil War.

Two years later, slavery would be abolished in all the United States. After 1865, the building's ownership and use changed many times. Between 1878 and 1937 the building was a tenement for black-Americans. In 1938, Miriam B. Wilson purchased the building, called locally the Old Slave Mart. Wilson established a museum featuring African and African-American arts and crafts. .

Old Slave Mart Museum

In 1964, Judith Wragg Chase and Louise Wragg Graves took over the Old Slave Mart Museum and got the Old Slave Mart building placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, and operated it until 1987.

The City of Charleston bought the property in 1988, having recognized its importance in the history of the slave trade in Charleston. The Old Slave Mart Museum inside the building displays accounts, many firsthand, of the slave trade from freed slaves told through photos and writings on display.

There are very few objects or interactive exhibits so children may be bored. If you don't know much about the history of the slave trade, you will find the museum interesting.

Old Provost & Exchange

When Chalmers Street dead ends on State Street, turn right and then take your first left onto Broad Street. Broad Street will end at East Bay Street and you'll see the Old Provost and Exchange directly in front of you.



By the 1770's Charleston's population was around 12,000 people, half of whom were slaves. In one year, over 7,000 Africans were channeled through the city to other parts of the colonies.

Old Provost & Exchange

The city's commercial center was Bay Street, anchored by the Custom's House (Exchange Building) where public slave auctions were held outside and along the adjacent wharves.

Other enterprises included brokers' offices and a large number of merchants who catered to the maritime trade. Rope, tar, lumber, canvas and nails were kept in good supply.

Great sailing ships arrived with bulk cargo from Europe, while smaller boats and canoes arrived via the local waterways loaded with animal skins, corn and other goods.

Rainbow Row

Turn right onto East Bay Street and head south 91 East Bay St will put you in the middle of Rainbow Row.

Just one look and you know how this stretch of houses along East Bay Street acquired its name. This series of row houses, painted in bright colors, date back to about 1740. As it is near what was the waterfront district of the city back in the 18th century, the houses were owned by well-off merchants who had stores on the ground floor and live in the upper floors.



Rainbow Row

These days, people can't seem to come to an agreement as to why the homes are all painted different colors. There are some people who believe that the hues were used to capture the attention of drunk sailors who might not have otherwise been able to find their way home.

Others believe that the colors had something to do with the merchants advertising their wares with the assistance of the hues. On the other hand, this could have been the result of a more practical concern. Due to the heat that is often so invasive in Charleston, it is thought that people might have turned to pastel colors to try and lower the temperatures within the properties.

You can read more on these festive houses in our post [What is Rainbow Row?](#)

Charles Towne Wall



Keep walking down East Bay Street, make sure you're on the left side of the road and as soon as you cross over S. Adgers Wharf you'll see portion of the old wall and a plaque.

Here is the only visible remains of the wall from 1680. On the plaque next to it are two sets of maps & images of Charles Towne's waterfront in 1740. The map dates to 1711.

The boundaries of the original Charles Towne and wall were:

- Cumberland Street as the Northern Wall
- King Street as the Western Wall
- Water Street as the Southern Wall
- and the waterfront ran along East Bay Street.

The walls were up from 1680-1720.

The High Battery



Keep going down East Bay Street on the left side of the road until the buildings end and you're at the sea wall.

The Battery was built 1820-1825. All the houses facing built on landfill. These homes are not the oldest you'll find in the city, but they're still old. All of them were built from 1820 on and they have aged gracefully. These houses were built by some of the wealthiest families in the area and are quite large.

The largest home in the battery is 20,000 sf (1850m) One question we're often asked is how many people live in them. All of these homes are single-family houses with just one normal size family in each.

The High Battery

Looking out towards the east, you can see views of Charlestons harbor & barrier islands. Between the islands is the mouth of harbor & Fort Sumter.

Fort Sumter is a legendary name in our history books. It is one of those few important locations that actually had a hand in shaping the history of this nation.

On that infamous day in April 1861, when Confederate forces fired the first shots of the Civil War on Federal Troops, the destiny of this country would forever be changed. Over 150 years later, Fort Sumter continues to be a major point of interest.

You can find out more about [visiting Fort Sumter here](#).

View of Walled City

Cross East Bay Street at first set of steps down to get to Water Street. Walk up to Church Street, stop at this intersection.



At this intersection, look for cars and then if its safe, walk halfway into the street & look (north) up Church St thru the tunnel of trees to the beige wall seen on other end.

That's St Phillips church- you are looking at the breadth of the old walled city. 😊

Nathaniel Russell House



Come back to Water Street and keep walking down until you reach the intersection with Meeting Street, where you'll turn right. The Nathaniel Russell House is on your left a few houses up.

It was built in 1808 by a wealthy merchant named Nathaniel Russell. Take a look at the wrought iron balcony and you'll see his initials woven in the ironwork. Though today it is considered a neoclassical architectural treasure, we don't know who the architect was.

The house was the home of the governor of South Carolina, Robert Allston during his time in office in the late 1850s and it would eventually be turned into a boarding school and then fall into disrepair.

Nathaniel Russell House

The Historic Charleston Foundation was created in 1955 to preserve this property and keep it from being subdivided into new lots. It only took 30 days to raise the \$65,000 for repairs and it has been opened to the public since.

The design of the house features rectangles and oval rooms which are connected by an elliptical staircase that floats upwards three floors. This is a highly rated attraction and we recommend taking a pause to visit inside.

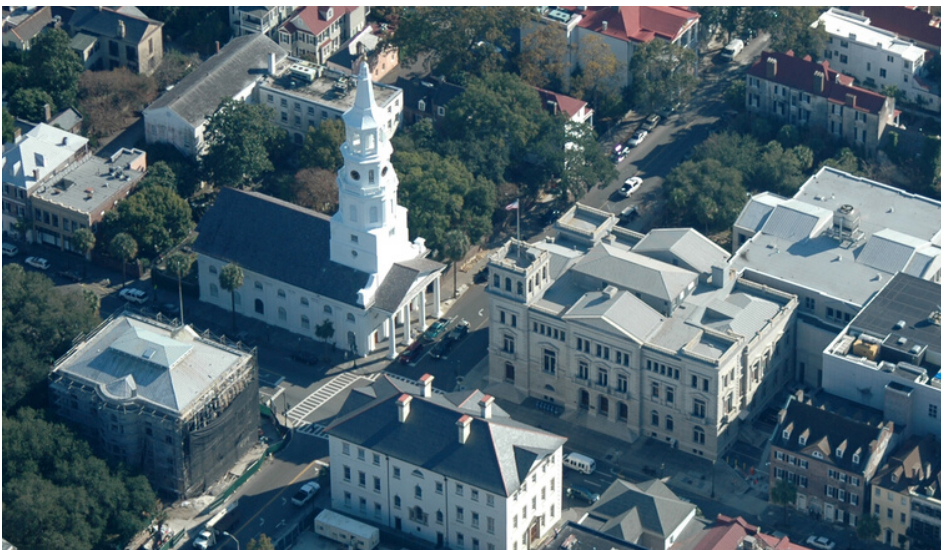
It is open 10am-5pm with a ticket price of \$12 for adults and \$5 for children under 16.

There is however no cost to explore the gardens.

Four Corners of Law

Continue up Meeting Street and cross Tradd Street. The next intersection is Broad Street. This is the Four Corners of Law.

The intersection of Broad and Meeting Streets is known today as the "Four Corners of the Law" since the four buildings situated here represent four arms of law -- city law (City Hall), state (Old State House), federal (Old Post Office/Court House) and clerical (St. Michael's Church)



Four Corners of Law

First, City Hall:

This hub of municipal government was constructed between 1800 and 1804 on the site of the city's meat market from 1739 until it was destroyed by fire in 1796. Free tours are offered and feature portraits of key Revolutionary War figures, including an odd portrait of General George Washington. There are public restrooms and a rest area, as well as an early town archaeological exhibit on first floor.

Note: This is a secured public building, and visitors to the upper floors must pass through metal detector screening before getting on the elevator.

Four Corners of Law

Look to the Northeast corner. The Old State House, now the Charleston County Court is one of the most significant buildings in South Carolina as it served at the provincial capitol for the state when it was still a British colony. The first building was in 1753 and it was here in 1776 that the first public reading in the colony of the Declaration of Independence took place on the second story balcony overlooking Meeting Street. The first building was destroyed by a fire towards the end of the Revolutionary War and a new building was erected in 1792. The building took another hit as it was badly damaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. It has since been restored to its 18th century splendor.

Note: Before entering you must inquire at the entrance whether the building is open to the public because sometimes private events are happening. If it is open, you will have to pass through security screening by guards at the door.

Four Corners of Law

On the Southwest corner is the Old Post Office and Federal Court House. Built in 1896 in the Renaissance Revival style, this attractive building is the federal element on the Four Corners the of Law. The post office is on the first level and above are the courtrooms.

You can walk in during normal business hours and you should. It's simply sumptuous. The interior is palatial with balustrade balconies, carved mahogany woodwork, a marble staircase, brass and ironwork, and stone columns. Who knew that buying a stamp could make you feel like royalty.

Four Corners of Law

Finally, here is the ecclesiastical corner of the Four Corners and it is the oldest and the oldest church in Charleston. The church was built between 1752 and 1761. St. Michael's congregation grew out of St. Philip's Episcopal church a few blocks away. In fact, the first St. Philip's church stood at this site from approximately 1681 to 1727. Then in 1751, the congregation split and St. Michael's was built.

St. Michael's was the city's focal point of Colonial resistance to the British. The church steeple was an easy target for British ship gunners. At one point, the congregation had the steeple painted black hoping to decrease its visibility. The reverse effect occurred and it was even more visible against the blue sky.

Four Corners of Law



Incredibly, St Michael's has survived hurricanes, wars, fires, earthquakes and even a cyclone with little damage. The interior of the church has a typical 18th-century English design, with native cedar box-pews. Pew Number 43 was used by George Washington in 1791 and later, in 1861, General Robert E. Lee sat in the same pew.

The church and graveyard are open to the public Monday-Friday 8:45am to 4:45pm and Saturday mornings.

End

We end the tour here so you can explore the Four Corners of Law.

If you continue up Meeting Street for three blocks is the Market area where the tour started.

Thank you for joining Atlantis Audio Tours and Free Tours by Foot on this walking tour of Historic Charleston.

Check out our website at www.freetoursbyfoot.com for more information on Charleston attractions or to book one of our many guided name your own price walking tours.

