



# Life in the Golden Isles

Your guide to the endless world  
of delights in the Golden Isles

Compliments of

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Life in the Golden Isles

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## **Get Out on the Water**

In the Golden Isles, life on the water is every bit as diverse, fascinating and scenic as life on land...maybe more so. If you're lucky enough to own a boat, power or sail, there are so many places you can go...so many things to see. Rivers, estuaries, creeks, Intracoastal Waterway, St. Simons Sound, the Atlantic Ocean. Whatever kind of boating you enjoy, it's here.

Fishing enthusiasts will find trout, redfish, flounder and whiting inshore. Go offshore for cobia, snapper, grouper and amberjack...not to mention sharks and tarpon. (If you're over 16, you will need a fishing license. Learn all you need to know [here](#).) Sailors can catch a breeze on St. Simons Sound and offshore. Our inshore waters are mostly calm, so you can enjoy a sunset cruise, sightseeing and watching the maritime wildlife.

But stay away from the shrimp boats. They attract a cloud of seagulls, and you don't want to be under that.

### **Be safe out there**

Do talk to other boaters and marina operators about water depths and shoaling. We have a very high tidal swing due to our location at the center of the Atlantic bight, so our waterways are constantly shifting about. Local knowledge and a depth sounder are essential. And local knowledge is available, along with slips, dry storage, supplies and maintenance at six local marinas. There are launch ramps at most of the marinas and public ramps at several other locations in the area. For more information, click [here](#).

### **Other maritime options**

If you don't have a boat, you can rent one or join a boating club. Or you can sign up for a fishing or sightseeing charter. There are dolphin cruises, sunset cruises and ecotourism boat rides. For a truly memorable experience, especially for the kids, catch a ride on the shrimp boat [Lady Jane](#). For the adults, we even have a floating casino, the [Emerald Princess](#).

## Get Some Waterborne Exercise

### And sightseeing to die for

If you're among those who know you should exercise more, but hate to do it, we have an answer—Stand-up Paddleboarding, also known as SUP. Stand-up Paddleboarding is easy to learn. It doesn't require a lot of expensive equipment, and it's a great full body workout. It's also something the whole family can enjoy together (minimum age is about 7-9). And there are mental health benefits too, like taking a much-needed break from daily stresses and getting out into the natural world.

The Golden Isles is quickly becoming a hotspot for SUP because we have so many incredible locations and breathtaking natural beauty. Our placid inland waterways, creeks and lagoons offer endless ways to lose yourself in nature. Because of the gentle slope of our beaches and offshore sandbars, wave action is normally quite low. Not much for surfers, but great for paddleboarders.

### Sit on the water

If you prefer to sit while still getting a good, low impact workout, try kayaking. It's another family-friendly waterborne activity that's good for your physical and mental health. There's just something about being close to the water. And once again, the startup costs are quite reasonable. Drive around the Golden Isles and you'll see lots of kayaks—in driveways and atop vehicles. The same gentle waterways that SUP'ers enjoy make life beautiful for kayakers.

If you're visiting here without a kayak or paddleboard, don't despair. Help is available. Tour operators like [Southeast Adventure Outfitters](#), [Turtle Tours](#), [Golden Isles Paddle Company](#), and [Kingfisher Paddleventures](#) will get you out on the water in no time. They can also offer expert help with equipment needs if you choose to take up one of these soul-satisfying watersports.

### Dive in

For an underwater adventure, we also have scuba diving. Not far offshore, shipwrecks and artificial reefs are waiting for you to explore. For advice on where to go and diving lessons, check in with the [Island Dive Center](#).

## About Our Beaches

If you were a pirate and buried your treasure on St. Simons East Beach say 10 or 15 years ago, and came back looking for it today, you would be out of luck. The sands here are forever on the move. Coastal breezes, storms and most of all the huge tidal swings are forever changing our shoreline. Speaking of tides, they range from about 7 to 9 feet, so there's always more beach available at low tide.

### St. Simons Island beaches

The most popular [beaches](#) on St. Simons Island are Coast Guard Beach, Massengale Park and Gould's Inlet. Massengale has shade trees and picnic tables with grills, restrooms, a children's playground and outdoor showers. Coast Guard Beach has a bath house with showers and restrooms, shaded picnic area, a concession stand (open in summer), lots of parking and a very wide beach. The adjacent old Coast Guard station now houses the [World War II Home Front Museum](#).

The beach at Gould's Inlet is beautiful and wide, but more susceptible to shifting sands. And because it's an inlet, offshore currents and riptides can be strong. Best not to swim near the beach access point. Head south until the beach curves toward the Atlantic. There's an outdoor shower and water hose available, and limited parking.

### Jekyll Island beaches

With ten miles of shoreline, Jekyll Island has seven public [beaches](#). All have a variety of facilities at the beach or close by. The most popular beaches tend to be in the center of the island, including Oceanview and Great Dunes Parks, and Corsair near the Beach Village. South Dunes Park has a large tree-shaded picnic area. Farther south at the soccer complex is Glory Beach, where portions of the 1989 Civil War drama *Glory* were filmed. The long, straight boardwalk leading to the beach was originally constructed by the production company. Near the southern tip of the island, St. Andrews beach actually faces west, looking out over Jekyll Sound opposite Cumberland Island. Like Gould's on St. Simons, it too faces an inlet, so currents can be strong.

The most famous, and certainly most unique beach on Jekyll Island is [Driftwood Beach](#). A favorite spot for locals and wedding planners, it's often referred to as a tree graveyard. Over the decades, several large oaks have been uprooted by the tides and

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their greyed-out remains and twisted branches create a starkly beautiful landscape...or seascape. To get there, head up to the north end of Jekyll on North Beachview Drive, just past Villas by the Sea. Limited parking is available on the west side of the road.



## Ain't We Got Birds

Did you know that the Golden Isles are a stop along the [Atlantic Migratory Flyway](#)? Turns out birds are a lot like people. They travel south for the winter. And back north in the spring. Some come all the way from Greenland. For Golden Isles residents, the fun part is they like to stop here. We're blessed with an abundance of avian lures, from copious amounts of food to isolated resting spots.

You don't have to be a birdwatcher to be fascinated by the more than 300 species that either live or pass through here. Serious birders will know about [Georgia's Colonial Coast Birding Trail](#), which extends along the entire Georgia coast and into the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Five of its eighteen sites are located in the Golden Isles.

Just to our north, [Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation](#) offers guided hikes through its network of trails. Look for herons, egrets, ibis and painted buntings. The official site on St. Simons Island is [Gould's Inlet and East Beach](#). Bring your folding chair, relax on the wide, sandy beach and look for painted buntings, laughing gulls, black skimmers and terns. You might also be distracted by the occasional dolphin.

There are three Trail sites on Jekyll Island. If you approach from the north on US 17, you will cross the Sidney Lanier Bridge, a tall suspension bridge named after the famous Georgia poet who wrote [The Marshes of Glynn](#). Just beyond, the six mile Jekyll Island Causeway has room to pull off along most of its route through those same Marshes of Glynn. There, depending on the time of year and day, you might see roseate spoonbills, osprey, white ibis and the occasional bald eagle. The other two sites are on the north end beaches, including [Driftwood Beach](#) (a must-see regardless) and the south end, including [St. Andrews Beach Park](#). At both, look for terns, American oystercatchers, skimmers, and plovers.

Although not officially on the Trail, Little St. Simons Island is a not-to-be-missed mecca for nature lovers of all stripes. It's a private island, only accessible by boat. But you can go there on a day trip out of the [Hampton River Marina](#) or stay at The Lodge on [Little St. Simons Island](#). On this island sanctuary, you'll learn about a lot more than birds, but you can find herons, egrets, wood storks, ibises, terns, roseate spoonbills and many, many more.

## **If Trees Could Talk, Live Oaks Would be the Best Storytellers**

They may not be as tall, but we love our live oaks here in the Golden Isles as much as Californians love their sequoias. A salt-tolerant species, they are the anchor of our maritime forests and they beautify our neighborhoods. They're huge. They're beautiful. They give us shade. No two are alike. And they're old. Some of them are very old.

There are live oaks in the Golden Isles that are older than America. Plantation Oak on Jekyll Island is between 350 and 400 years old, say the experts. Lover's Oak in Brunswick was there when Columbus arrived! That would be Christopher Columbus. In 1492. A more youthful group of trees, the much-visited Avenue of the Oaks on St. Simons Island was planted in 1850.

Visit Neptune Park on St. Simons Island, especially around dusk, and you're likely to find photographers capturing images of families, brides and grooms and visiting groups in front of the massive live oaks.

Today our live oaks are protected, but that wasn't always the case. From about 1874 to just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Georgia Land and Lumber Company operated lumber mills in the Gascoigne Bluff area. Much of the lumber used in construction of New York's Brooklyn Bridge came from here. Before that, in the early 1800's St. Simons lumber was used on "Old Ironsides", the USS Constitution.

The iconic Spanish moss that hangs from virtually every live oak is not really moss. It's an herb...a bromeliad. It picks up its nutrients not from the trees, but from whatever floats by in the air. The name however has an interesting history. Native Americans called it *Itla-okla*, or "tree hair". Hearing this, the early French explorers decided it resembled the beards of Spanish conquistadors and called it Spanish beard. Despite Spanish attempts to re-name it French hair, the French description prevailed, and somewhere over the centuries, it got changed to Spanish moss.

Unlike many other oak species, live oaks are evergreens—alive in winter—hence the name.

## There are Spirits in Our Trees

Here's a Halloween idea. Dress up as a tree spirit. "What's a tree spirit?" you ask. If you spend any time on St. Simons Island, you might encounter one.

Tree spirits are faces carved into a few of our Live Oaks—some sorrowful, some majestic, all mysterious. For well over 30 years, visitors and residents have been encountering these arborescent faces. Many have no idea how they got there. So naturally, quite a few legends have grown up around them.

Many believe they commemorate sailors who have lost their lives at sea in wooden ships constructed from the area's Live Oak timbers. Some are said to be the images of Native Americans who lived here long before the arrival of Europeans. But how did they get here?

Back in the early 1980's, artist Keith Jennings carved a face into a tree in his back yard. Everyone who saw it loved it. Soon he was doing it on commission and tree spirits were appearing all over the island...many of them on private property.

So what's the story behind them? If you ask Keith Jennings, it's a lot like asking a songwriter the meaning behind one of his/her most popular compositions. "The trees do it all," he says. "I don't have that much to do with it. The wood speaks to you."

OK, is he claiming to hear tree voices? Not at all. Like so many of us who live on this very special island, he feels a connection with the trees. Each one is unique, and he gets his inspiration directly from the tree. And if you've ever loved a particular tree or perhaps a forest, you probably know what he's talking about. And when you see a tree spirit, you'll likely derive your own meaning from it.

Sadly however, tree spirits are not eternal. They age. As the trees grow and change, their shape can change. Sometimes that adds even more character and mystery. Sometimes nature gets the best of them. Insect infestations, overgrowth, and wood rot can deface or cover them up. Some are gone because the trees died of old age and had to be removed.

But the good news is that Keith is still at it, together with his son, Devon. Working with the [Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau](#), he will be adding more spirits on public property, accessible to everyone. Stop by the St. Simons Welcome Center at 529 Beachview Drive, see the carving in their parking lot and pick up a map showing all the public locations.

## Be an Explorer on Little St. Simons Island

For those who like time travel, consider a visit to Little St. Simons Island. Here, your natural surroundings will be pretty much what they were centuries ago.

This inverted-comma-shaped island that wraps around the north end of St. Simons Island has been in private hands since King George II granted it to a colonist in 1760. Unlike most other Georgia barrier islands, Little St. Simons Island largely escaped development during the plantation era and was spared the axe during the lumber milling years that followed. In 1908, the Eagle Pencil Company purchased the island to provide wood for its pencils. Fortunately for the trees, they proved unsuitable for the task. But company president Philip Berolzheimer loved the island and bought it for use as a hunting and fishing retreat. In 1917, he built a hunting lodge for his family and friends. After decades of private use, the family made some renovations and opened the facility to the public in 1979 as [The Lodge at Little St. Simons Island](#).

So by accident of history, the island has remained largely undisturbed. And it will stay that way forever thanks to current owners Hank and Wendy Paulson, who donated a conservation easement to [The Nature Conservancy](#) for the entire island.

There are no bridges and no causeway to Little St. Simons Island. Overnight accommodations are limited to 32 guests. [Day trips](#) are available for a small number of visitors. So it takes a little planning to get there. But it's well worth it.

Here you can experience the awe of discovery inside a maritime forest fronting seven miles of primeval beach. Island staff includes professional naturalists who are available as guides for fishing, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, birding, eco-tours and more. Some of them live on the island—nice work if you can get it. During sea turtle nesting season, nighttime turtle walks are a rare and special treat.

For Lodge guests, three meals a day are included, served family-style in the dining room and include locally sourced food plus treats from their organic garden. Day trips include a chef-prepared lunch.

## **A Golfers' Paradise**

Have you ever wanted to take a pure golfing vacation? Think about this. You could come to the Golden Isles for a week, never play the same hole twice and go home a better golfer.

Across the Golden Isles we have 189 holes of golf. Public courses include [Heritage Oaks](#) on Brunswick's Oak Grove Island, the [Jekyll Island Golf Club](#) where you will find three 18-hole courses and one 9-hole, the [Sea Palms Golf Club](#), featuring a recently reconditioned 18-hole championship course and practice facility, and the [King & Prince](#) 18-hole championship golf course, with marsh island holes and 800 feet of elevated cart bridges.

The [Brunswick Country Club](#) is a private facility, but they do offer flexible membership options, including Non-Resident and Seasonal. Then there's the [Sea Island Club](#), limited to members and hotel guests at The Lodge, The Cloister, and The Inn at Sea Island. Their three 18-hole championship courses, located on St. Simons Island include the Scottish links style [Seaside](#), newly re-designed [Plantation](#), and for a broad range of players—[Retreat](#). Every November, the PGA Tour's [RSM Classic](#) brings many of the nation's top golfers to the Seaside and Plantation courses.

### **Lessons for all skill levels**

You'll also have a chance to improve your game here, with instruction available at all of our golf clubs, including the Sea Island Club's state-of-the-art [Golf Performance Center](#) and Putting Studio, staffed with master teachers.

### **For the history buff**

The game of golf has a long and rich history in the Golden Isles. Way back in 1898, members of the Jekyll Island Golf Club built the area's first course. Not the most inspiring facility according to lore, but a start. In 1927 Howard Coffin, who had just purchased Sea Island, opened the Walter Travis designed Plantation Course. A year later, the Jekyll Island Golf Club opened their own new course, designed by the renowned Travis. Several more followed, creating today's exceptional golf landscape.

## Places to Visit – Colonial Times

The past is never really past. Things remain. Stories are told. Drawings are made. And since the mid-nineteenth century, pictures are taken. Which is great because at some point most of us get curious about what happened here before. It's no surprise that this area's natural beauty and resources have attracted visitors for many centuries. So if you're curious about the Golden Isles' past, here are some of our most visited places.

### Fort Frederica

After establishing his first colony at Savannah, General James Oglethorpe built a fort and settlement on St. Simons Island in 1736 to defend his southern flank from the Spanish at St. Augustine, Florida. By 1743, almost 1,000 people lived there--British soldiers and farmer-colonists who provisioned them. After the battle of Bloody Marsh removed the threat of invasion and a peace treaty was signed in 1748, the regiment was disbanded and colonists gradually left. In 1758 a fire consumed the entire town and the remains went to ruin. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, locals became interested in excavating and preserving the ruins, and the [Fort Frederica National Monument](#) was established in 1945.

### Bloody Marsh

After a failed siege of St. Augustine by James Oglethorpe, an army of Spanish troops and ships invaded and occupied Fort St. Simons, then located at the site of today's lighthouse. Their intent was to overtake Fort Frederica. On their way north, the Spanish were ambushed and routed by Oglethorpe's small, 50-man force hidden in the woods. Having suffered heavy casualties, running low on provisions and assuming, wrongly, that a British flotilla was soon to arrive, they returned to St. Augustine, never to return. Today, a granite marker commemorating the event stands at the edge of the [battle site](#) just off Old Demere Road.

### Christ Church Cemetery

The Christ Church cemetery, where many of the Georgia colony's early leaders and settlers are buried, includes graves from as far back as 1796. The oldest marked grave dates from 1803. Inhabitants include church builder Anson Greene Phelps Dodge, James Gould who designed the original St. Simons Lighthouse, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century novelist Eugenia Price. The cemetery is open to visitors from dawn to dusk every day except Mondays.

## Places to Visit – Religious History

### Christ Church

The origins of the Christ Church parish date back to the 1736 settlement at Fort Frederica, where John and Charles Wesley preached. Although the settlement disappeared, enough colonists remained so that by 1808 the Georgia legislature chartered [Christ Church at Frederica](#). The original church, completed in 1820 was largely destroyed during the Civil War. The parish then met elsewhere until Anson Greene Phelps Dodge built the present-day church in 1884 and served as its first rector. Today the parish is thriving with almost 1,000 members.

### Arthur J. Moore Methodist Museum

The [Arthur J. Moore Museum](#), on a street of the same name in [Epworth by the Sea](#) on St. Simons Island is the place to go if you want to learn about island history, John Wesley and the origins of the Methodist movement, along with the birth of Methodism in Georgia.

The museum includes exhibits and videos covering the early Native American period, the Colonial era, and the surrounding area's history--Hamilton plantation, the lumber milling days and Bishop Moore's founding of Epworth by the Sea. The research library and its extensive collection of archives is available to researchers.

### First African Baptist Church

In 1869 a congregation of former slaves on St. Simons Island came together to construct their own [church](#) not far from the ruins of Fort Frederica. A two-story frame building with a steeple, it's been expanded and renovated over the years, but its original core remains in place. That early congregation was scattered all over the island, but they continued to make what was then a difficult trip every Sunday to attend services. Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the congregation began to establish mission churches in other parts of the island. There are no church tours available, but visitors are always welcome at 11am Sunday services.

## **Places to Visit – Brunswick & Jekyll Island History**

### **Old City Hall**

After four years of construction, at a cost of \$33,000 (that's 1880's dollars), the new Brunswick City Hall opened for municipal business in 1890. Four years later it gained a clock tower complete with scary gargoyles. In 2004, after official city business had moved to a new location, the building was renovated. Today the resplendent red and grey edifice at Newcastle and Mansfield Streets hosts a municipal court, city commission meetings, and the Downtown Development Authority's headquarters. It's open to the public and available for weddings, meetings and all variety of celebrations and receptions.

### **Historic Ritz Theatre**

In 1899 the Grand Opera House opened in downtown Brunswick as a venue for legitimate theater. The building also included some retail space and the headquarters of the Brunswick & Birmingham Railroad. Not long after, it hosted vaudeville acts. When motion pictures came along in the Roaring Twenties, it was converted into a movie theater, complete with marquee and vertical sign with a new name, the Ritz.

After decades as *the* place to see a movie in Brunswick, the Ritz fell into a long period of decline, beginning in the late 60's and 70's as multiplexes slowly took over. In 1981, the City of Brunswick purchased the theater and began a series of upgrades and reconstruction. Today the Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association operates a totally rejuvenated Ritz, with live performances, classic movies, art exhibits, community events and more.

### **Jekyll Island Historic District**

Jekyll Island has been around for a long time. Native Americans, French explorers, British colonists and plantation owners all stopped by. None of them left much that remains today. However the tycoons of America's Gilded Age (roughly 1870-1900) left behind an entire neighborhood now known as Jekyll Island Historic District.

After the Jekyll Island Club purchased the island in 1886, its fabulously wealthy members (Rockefellers, Morgans, Astors, Vanderbilts, etc.) built their own getaway mansions. One



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of the first structures built was the Clubhouse—today's Jekyll Island Club Resort. Evacuation of the island during World War II put an end to the Club, and in 1947 the state of Georgia bought the island, converting it into a state park. Today, visitors can stay in the Clubhouse and tour the restored homes via an open-air trolley.

## Places to Visit – Museums

### Coastal Georgia Historical Society Museums

The Coastal Georgia Historical Society operates three museums on St. Simons Island. The newest is the [World War II Home Front Museum](#), located in the old Coast Guard Station on East Beach. Several interactive exhibits and oral histories will take you back to the war years when German U-boats prowled the coast, sinking three ships (survivors from two of them were rescued by station crewmembers). You'll learn about Liberty ship construction in Brunswick, Glynco Naval Air Station whose blimps provided anti-submarine patrols that ended the U-Boat threat, and the Navy's radar training school at the King & Prince Hotel.

At the [St. Simons Lighthouse and Museum](#), you can climb 129 steps for a pelican's eye view from the still-active, 148 year-old lighthouse, or cruise through the former Keepers Dwelling which is now a window into the island's past. Time travelers will enjoy the upstairs period rooms glimpse into 1907.

Not far from the Lighthouse, the [A.W. Jones Heritage Center](#) serves as headquarters of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. There you can shop the museum store, attend lectures, and check out the local history exhibits. If you're into serious research, you can access their archival collection of over 15,000 items—available by appointment. Also upstairs is a 1,400 sq. ft. event hall, used for weddings, special occasions and corporate events.

### The Historic Harrington School

In the 1920's, when the majority of St. Simons Island was African American farmers, tradesmen and sawmill workers, a one-room schoolhouse was built for their children. It soon became more than a school, evolving into a community center and meeting space.

When Glynn County schools desegregated in the 1960's, the school was briefly converted to a day care center and eventually abandoned. In 2004, Glynn County and the St. Simons Land Trust acquired a 12-acre tract along South Harrington Road that included the school. Their original intent was to demolish the badly deteriorated building. That's when the local community and the [St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition](#) banded together to create a restoration and fundraising project to save this former community hub. The ribbon cutting and celebration finally came about In August, 2017 at the [Historic Harrington School Cultural Center](#).

## Winter Holiday Fun

Holiday Season in the Golden Isles means good times, good cheer, and more often than not—good weather.

There will be craft shows, Santa sightings, lights, parades and even fireworks. Here's a partial rundown of holiday happenings. Be sure to check the links for additional events and information.

On St. Simons Island, support local artists and artisans at Glynn Visual Arts' [Mistletoe Market](#) in Postell Park. And you certainly don't want to miss their Holiday Hound Hike on Saturday morning with local pooches dressed in their holiday best. Also on St. Simons, catch a ride on Lighthouse Trolleys' [Tour of Lights](#) every evening from mid-December to just after Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, look for Santa, Mrs. Claus and the island elves on his antique red fire truck, thanks to the St. Simons Civinette Club and Glynn County Fire Department.

Jekyll Island becomes [Holly Jolly Jekyll](#) from late November until just after the New Year. Enjoy light tours (over a half-million lights they say) and the Holly Jolly Parade led by Santa himself. Pick up some holiday treasures from the artists of the Jekyll Island Arts Association at the [Merry Artists' Market](#) in Goodyear Cottage. See the fireworks from Beach Village.

Brunswick's annual [Christmas Tree Lighting](#) ceremony features a reading of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas", caroling, carriage rides and who knows, Santa might even show up. The Downtown Brunswick Annual Christmas Parade happens on the first Saturday in December, starting at Howard Coffin Park. Floats, vehicles, walkers and marching bands will head south to Mary Ross Riverfront Park, where Santa awaits. Crafts Along Newcastle will feature a variety of holiday items. So don't spend all your money on Black Friday. For theater fans, the Historic Ritz Theatre will offer a stage production of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

For more, check out the [Golden Isles Convention & Visitors Bureau list](#).

## Independence Day Events

It was not that long ago (2016) that USA Today's 10 Best Reader Poll selected Brunswick's Old Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration at Mary Ross Waterfront Park as the best Fourth of July festival in the country. Any why not? There's a big parade, live music, free watermelon, a cornhole tournament, axe throwing tournament, a farmer's market with food vendors, and lots of kids' games. The big event is a 30-minute fireworks display over the waters of the East River and Oglethorpe Bay.

Over on St. Simons Island, the annual Sunshine Festival features craft and artist booths at Postell Park in the Village. There will also be gourmet foods and food trucks, so you won't go hungry. If you're a runner, you probably know about the [Golden Isles Track Club's](#) Sunshine Festival 5K at Mallery Park. It's followed by a children's one-mile Fun Run. And you don't want to miss the annual golf cart parade cruising down Mallery Street. About 100 carts, decked out in Fourth of July finery will be there. The festival concludes with the traditional fireworks display over St. Simons Sound at around 9:00 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup>. To accommodate fireworks preparation, the Village Pier will be closed beginning early in the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup>.

On Jekyll Island, fireworks flare over the ocean at around 9:00 pm. Best viewing locations are Great Dunes Beach and Oceanview Beach Park—both near the middle of the island.

Guests and residents of Sea Island enjoy a long list of fun items, including cruises, the Firecracker 5K, and a Family Fun Run. There's a parade down Sea Island Drive with a variety of motor and human-powered vehicles. And after dark on the 4<sup>th</sup>, it's fireworks on the beach.

## Our Creative Side

In 1961 Eugenia Price, a writer of inspirational books and early radio soap operas for Proctor & Gamble, stopped by St. Simons Island while on a book tour. It changed her life forever. Inspired by a gravestone in Christ Church cemetery, she wound up writing a trilogy of novels set on the island and resettled permanently in a home not far from Christ Church. She went on to write several more bestselling novels.

Like “Genie”, countless other creatives have been inspired by this area’s charms. The result is a thriving community of creative artists in just about any medium you can think of. Stop by the pier and there’s a good chance you’ll see a painter, or maybe a professional photographer along with the dozens of snapshooters. Stroll down Newcastle Street in Brunswick and browse through several different galleries. Visit Postell Park behind the library at the Pier Village on any given weekend, and there’s a good chance you will encounter a craft show featuring local artists offering any number of imaginative works.

[Glynn Visual Arts](#), a local nonprofit offers exhibitions throughout the year, art festivals at Postell Park, and classes in painting, pottery and visual storytelling among others. The [Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association](#) provides classes, exhibits, live events and performances. They also operate the historic Ritz Theatre in downtown Brunswick. Another nonprofit, [The Island Players](#) stage performances at the Pier Village Casino Theatre.

If you’re into music, check with some locals. Music venues are scattered all over the Golden Isles. In the summer, you can enjoy seaside concerts at the St. Simons Lighthouse, or riverside at Mary Ross Park in Brunswick. For classical music lovers, [The Coastal Symphony of Georgia](#) holds a series of concerts every year at the Brunswick High School Auditorium; and the [Island Concert Association](#) schedules performances by nationally recognized artists. The [Golden Isles Youth Orchestra](#) offers classroom instruction, concerts and a variety of programs for local youth interested in classical music.

## **Everyone's Fun Zone – Pier Village & Neptune Park**

How about enjoying some island ambiance, a selection of outdoor activities, shopping at innovative boutiques where you won't find the ordinary, dining at a selection of eateries where you can order whatever you're in the mood for...all in the space of a few blocks?

If that's not enough, you can admire giant live oaks, take in some ocean views, people watch at the pier, and stroll along an oceanside path. Fresh catch is available at the pier if you bring your fishing rod or crab trap (you do have to be lucky as well). Or you can sit in a rocking chair above the Casino steps and watch aspiring quarterbacks toss footballs on the huge grassy lawn, while you look for dolphins in the ocean just beyond. If you time it right, you might catch a happy couple getting married under a giant oak.

If the little ones are with you, check out the playground with swings and slides on soft ground. And benches for you. Then play a round of miniature golf. There's no penalty for underreporting your strokes.

On a warm summer's day, there's no better place than the [Fun Zone Pool](#). The unique, curved design starts out as a wading pool that gradually transforms into a lap pool for adults. Then there's a separate children's pool with a water gym complete with slides and water cannons. There are also plenty of certified lifeguards plus an on-site concession stand. The whole complex is surrounded by wide pool decks with comfy lounge chairs and several large tables with umbrellas.

At day's end, enjoy some live music and mingle with the locals at your choice of music venues. If it's a summertime Sunday evening, follow the crowd to the Lighthouse lawn for an outdoor, seaside concert. Bring lawn chairs and a picnic basket.

All this is way more fun than you can have in a day. So you'll want to come back again and again.

## Marshes of Glynn Libraries

You don't have to be a bookworm to love our libraries. The facilities are warm and inviting and open to all. The staff is always friendly, knowledgeable and eager to help. There's space to relax with a book, public computers for browsing the Internet or searching for books, and a children's section to stimulate young minds. In addition to traditional bound books, [Marshes of Glynn Libraries](#) patrons can check out CD's and DVD's, audiobooks and eBooks.

The recently renovated Brunswick Library at the corner of Gloucester and Bay Streets offers free Wi-Fi, art exhibits, yoga classes, crafting, movies, book discussion clubs and reading lessons for young children. They also hold regular workshops on subjects including personal finance, health and job hunting. Meeting spaces available for rent include a large conference room and two smaller meeting rooms.

For area researchers and historians, the Brunswick facility also includes a [Heritage Room](#) with records, maps and photographs detailing local history. The [Glynn County Law Library](#) offers free access to legal resources for the State of Georgia along with legal research databases.

The St. Simons Island Library is located in the [St. Simons Casino Building](#) at the Pier Village. Like its Brunswick counterpart, the St. Simons Library offers free Wi-Fi, public computers, a children's section, special events and just outside, a spectacular view of St. Simons Sound with comfortable rocking chairs ideal for reading a good book. Locals and visitors are quick to praise the extraordinarily helpful and friendly staff.

The Marshes of Glynn Libraries is a participant in the [Georgia Library PINES](#) (Public Information Network for Electronic Services) program. Library card holders who join the PINES network (at no charge) can access books and materials at any of the 52 participating library systems throughout the state and have them delivered to their home library.

For research into an extensive variety of topics, the virtual library [GALILEO](#) offers access to over 100 databases including thousands of periodicals, encyclopedias, business directories and government publications. For those interested in learning a new language, GALILEO offers access to the MANGO language learning system.

## Life in the Golden Isles

Some of the Library's most ardent supporters are members of the [Friends of the Library](#), a fund-raising group that operates a used book store in the Brunswick library and holds semi-annual book sales and sponsors a variety of reading programs. They are always on the lookout for new members.



## St. Simons Land Trust

How do we protect and preserve a place that offers an endless variety of natural wonders and defend it from too much love? That's a question that haunted local leaders on St. Simons Island in the late 1990's when the secret was starting to get out. Fearing that overdevelopment might diminish the very things that make people want to come here, a small group of visionaries founded the [St. Simons Land Trust](#) in 2000. Their stated purpose is "to protect our scenic and historic treasures and to preserve the beauty and charm of our island for generations to come".

Soon after, the founding group held an oyster roast at Village Creek Landing that attracted about 70 guests—more than they had hoped for. That marked the start of an annual tradition and a growing love affair with the island's residents. Today the Land Trust has over 1,200 household members, many of whom contribute generous sums annually. Their annual oyster roast is now attracting well over 1,000 guests.

Since its founding, the Land Trust has acquired more than 1,000 acres with another 300 acres in conservation easements.

Their first major acquisition was today's [John Gilbert Nature Trail](#) on Frederica Road in the center of the island. In 2002 Dorothy Gilbert donated 40 acres of marshfront property in honor of her late husband, John. The popular trail winds through maritime forest, past "John's oak" to the marsh.

The Oatland Hassell tracts on the island's north end came into the fold in 2018. The north tract is home to [The Farm at Oatland North](#), an animal rescue sanctuary that's well worth a visit.

[Frederica Park and the Alice Richards Botanical Trail](#) on Lawrence Road is the result of a land donation from the Sea Island Company and \$1 million in funding from the estate of Alice Richards, who was a committed member of the UGA Botanical Garden's advisory board. In addition to the botanical trail, the county-operated park includes a four-acre playfield complex for field sports including soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and rugby. There is also a children's playground, picnic shelters, dog park and running trail.

By far the largest and most ecologically significant parcel in the Land Trust's portfolio is [Cannon's Point Preserve](#)—608 acres in the northeast corner of St. Simons Island. It's a

## Life in the Golden Isles

true wilderness area consisting of maritime forest, salt marsh, tidal creek, river shoreline and plantation ruins. Evidence of past civilizations found there has made it a popular spot for archaeological research. Cannon's Point is open to the public on a limited schedule. Check the [website](#) for details and recommended preparations for visiting.

The Land Trust owns numerous other parcels throughout the island in their ongoing quest to preserve and protect.

## Historic Brunswick

Brunswick, Georgia has been around for a while. Established in 1771, it predates the United States. And it has a rich history as a seaport town ever since George Washington named it one of the five original ports of entry for the new nation in 1789. In addition to its deep, natural harbor that services seagoing cargo ships and its flotilla of shrimp boats, Brunswick offers a large marina that attracts recreational boaters from all over the world.

Historic Downtown Brunswick was originally modeled after General Oglethorpe's layout for Savannah—a grid pattern of streets interspersed with small squares. The pattern endures today, and the squares have been revitalized as greenspaces, pocket parks, and venues for community activities. Since 2005, the nonprofit Signature Squares of Brunswick has painstakingly restored and renewed many of the squares with contributions and countless hours of volunteer work by local residents.

Most of the downtown commercial activity can be found in the vicinity of Gloucester and Newcastle streets. Restaurants, boutiques, art galleries, even a brewery and a rum distillery can be found here. Just a few blocks east, Union Street is renowned for its variety of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture.

Just to the west on Brunswick's East River is [Mary Ross Waterfront Park](#)—a popular destination to watch shrimp boats, have a picnic, stroll past the marina, check out the farmers market, take in a concert and enjoy a variety of public events.

Whenever you visit Brunswick, chances are you're not that many days away from a fun, public event. At the monthly First Fridays from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, you can enjoy food samples, live music, and extended shopping hours. Springtime brings Rhythm on the River concerts. Annual events include the Mayfair Blessing of the Fleet Festival, Brunswick Rockin' Stewbilee, Old-Fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July (winner of USA Today's Best 4th of July Festival in 2016), the Southeast Georgia Health System Bridge Run across the Sidney Lanier Bridge, the Brunswick Christmas Parade and other year-end holiday events.

Thanks to a passionate local citizenry, today's Brunswick is enjoying a renaissance that, together with its enviable location, portends a very exciting future.

## The Golden Isles Business Community

Whether you're a business owner, employee or a startup entrepreneur, there's lots of opportunity in the Golden Isles. We have a very active and effective chamber of commerce along with several other sources of help for all local businesses. Most importantly, we have a culture of entrepreneurship, creativity and mutual support.

The dominant industries here, unsurprisingly, are travel and tourism related. Hotels, restaurants, entertainment and recreation activities flourish. Retail, healthcare, educational services and manufacturing are also important. Glynn county's major employers include the Southeast Georgia Health System, Glynn County School System, Sea Island Company, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), and Glynn County. Other important businesses include food processing, aviation and logistics.

Equally important are the thousands of small businesses and entrepreneurs who add a special vitality, creative spark and spirit of innovation. Like every other community, we work to attract established companies who want to expand. But it's the small operators with big ideas who create a solid and diversified economic base. And while they're at it, they make business fun here in the Golden Isles.

Many of our existing support organizations are geared toward helping small businesses thrive. The University of Georgia's [Small Business Development Center](#) provides extensive consulting services in all aspects of business operations—all at no charge. The [Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce](#) doesn't just advocate for business. They provide professional development and training, educational and networking events, leadership programs and more. As a 5-star Accredited Chamber by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ours is one of only 194 in the U.S. to have earned that designation, which puts them in the top 1%.

For entrepreneurs and startups, [The Lucas Forum](#), operated by the College of Coastal Georgia, is a monthly gathering where they can make a short presentation about their business and get help and advice plus networking opportunities with fellow entrepreneurs.

The nonprofit [Coastal Area District Development Authority](#) helps with small business loans. [SCORE's Savannah office](#) has representatives here—experienced and successful businesspeople who freely share their expertise. Even the [Golden Isles Development](#)

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[Authority](#), tasked with bringing businesses here, makes it a strong priority to help locals. There are also private networking groups and others who work to create economic opportunity throughout the Golden Isles.

## Shopping Locally in the Golden Isles

Shopping in the Golden Isles is good for the soul. Not only will you find a plethora of one-of-a-kind stuff, but you will feel great about helping hard-working merchants and artisans earn a living. Our abundance of local creativity shows up in the shops, boutiques, galleries and gift stores all over the Golden Isles.

But it's not just all the neat stuff. It's the attitude. Island shopkeepers want you to enjoy the experience. They work hard to be gracious, attentive and friendly. They appreciate your support and will go out of their way to offer help and advice and solve problems. It's part of the Golden Isles ambiance.

Stroll down Newcastle Street in Historic Downtown Brunswick and check out the art galleries, jewelry and unique clothing shops. You'll find antiques, handmade art objects and lots of home décor treasures. You can also stop for a bite and sample some premises-made beer and rum. For a good roundup of what's available, check out the [Discover Brunswick](#) website.

On St. Simons Island, the Pier Village combines an array of fun, outdoor activities with an eclectic mix of shopping opportunities. Up and down Mallery Street, you can find gifts, antiques, furniture, crafts, beach & fishing gear, and more. Not to mention a delicious selection of restaurants to keep you energized. And did we mention sweets and frozen desserts? No shopping trip is complete without that.

Farther north, just past the Frederica/Demere roundabout, sits [Redfern Village](#). Park your car and wander through another wide selection of specialty shops where you will find jewelry, shoes, apparel, beachwear and treasures that will look great in your home...plus restaurants and some lively nightlife.

If that's not enough, there's more shopping at Retreat Plaza near the airport. Farther north, it's the Shops at Sea Island plus Market Street Shops at the intersection of Frederica and Sea Island Roads. For more, see the list at [explore St. Simons Island.com](#).

On Jekyll Island things are a bit more concentrated. Visit the Historic District and the Beach Village for hand-made creations, sea turtle memorabilia, coastal apparel, gifts, eyewear, beach essentials, an old-timey general store and a grocery store with way more to see than your average supermarket. Learn more at the [Jekyll Island website](#).

## **And We're a College Town**

In addition to all of its natural delights, the Golden Isles is also home to a vibrant college community. The [College of Coastal Georgia](#) (CCGA), with a total enrollment of over 3,500 students, is part of the University of Georgia system. The College consists of three schools: [Arts & Sciences](#), [Business & Public Management](#), and [Nursing & Health Sciences](#). Students may earn undergraduate degrees in a wide variety of study areas, including American Studies, Biological Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Health Informatics, Mathematics, Nursing (BSN), Psychology, Public Affairs and Interdisciplinary Studies. Inspired by its location, the school has added bachelor's programs in Environmental Science and Hospitality & Tourism Management.

In recent years, the College's BSN nursing program has been consistently ranked among the best in Georgia. CCGA graduates have regularly maintained a pass rate of 100% on the National Council Licensure Exam administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Also of note: their Teacher Education graduates have enjoyed a 100% placement rate.

In an effort to foster community engagement and ensure that students acquire real-world skills, CCGA has partnered with area service organizations to offer a variety of [Service-Learning](#) opportunities. Students acquire course credit while performing specific tasks for local agencies related to the course content.

The [Golden Isles College & Career Academy](#) (GICCA) is a public charter school that offers career-development programs for high school students and selected college programs for adults. The Academy was founded in 2009 as a way to foster a skilled, local workforce for area businesses while creating opportunities for high school students to develop marketable skills. GICCA also offers adult continuing education programs and college credit courses for all.

[Coastal Pines Technical College](#) has a campus in Brunswick and several other southeast Georgia locations. A two-year college, Coastal Pines offers associate degrees and technical certificate programs in a wide variety of disciplines. Including online opportunities, adult education, and dual enrollment classes that bring college credit for high school students.

Alabama-based [Troy University](#) operates a support center on Golden Isles Parkway in Brunswick offering both online and in class programs.

## **Even Our Airports Have Stories to Tell**

Howard Coffin was a visionary. A highly successful automotive engineer and designer, he supervised aircraft production during World War I as a member of President Wilson's Council of National Defense. After the war, he partnered with Bill Jones in the late 1920's to build the Cloister Hotel and develop Sea Island. As a resort developer, he wanted to improve access to the Golden Isles. From his wartime experience, he saw the need for an airport—not just for tourist access, but for national defense purposes.

So he enlisted a like-minded friend, Glynn County Commission Chairman Malcolm McKinnon, to raise funds for the project. After a valiant effort, McKinnon secured WPA funding to build the region's first airport on St. Simons Island.

When McKinnon Airport was completed in 1938, another world war was approaching, and Coffin's vision would soon be confirmed. When locals began to see German U-boats just offshore, Coffin and others worked to create the Georgia Civil Air Patrol. In 1942, the US Navy took control of the new airport and named it NAS St. Simons. From there, patrol planes searched for U-boat activity.

Meanwhile, on the mainland, the Navy was building a massive base to house blimps and a variety of other aircraft to counter the U-boat attacks on merchant shipping in and out of Brunswick harbor. Once operational, blimps and planes from NAS Glynco were successful in completely halting the U-boat attacks.

Operations at Glynco continued until 1974, when the Navy decided to close the base for cost-reduction purposes. That sparked an energetic campaign by community leaders, which ultimately led the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to select Glynco as the site for its new facility. The adjacent 8,000 foot runway became today's Brunswick Golden Isles Airport.

Both airports house comprehensive general aviation facilities, including maintenance, fuel, pilots' lounges, ground transportation and overnight hanger space. From Brunswick, Delta Airlines' Delta Connection provides daily non-stop service to Atlanta. Onsite parking is free—a rare treat for today's travelers. McKinnon Airport also features an adjacent hotel.



## **Who Needs Broadway? Theater in the Golden Isles**

If you love theater...and you enjoy small, intimate settings where you're almost part of the performance...you're going to delight in the Golden Isles theater scene. Whether it's Broadway hits or innovative, locally written comedies, musicals and dramas, there's plenty to choose from. And you'll be impressed by the quality of the acting.

### **The Island Players – a Community Theatre**

In its seaside setting at the St. Simons Casino Theatre, the [Island Players](#) schedule four performances each year, with locals encouraged to audition for parts or participate in the production crews. They strive for an eclectic mix of musicals, dramas, comedies and mysteries. An all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, the Island Players are supported by donations from area businesses and individuals, membership subscriptions and gate receipts.

In addition to their annual productions, the Island Players conduct [The Young People's Summer Workshop](#), serving about 80 youngsters aged 8+. This six-week program introduces participants to different aspects of theater life, while allowing them to form new friendships with like-minded contemporaries.

### **Brunswick Actors' Theatre**

Take a walk along Newcastle Street in downtown Brunswick's historic district, and you will likely encounter a few artsy storefronts next to a well-manicured vest pocket park. Welcome to Art Downtown's [SoGlo Gallery and the Brunswick Actors' Theatre](#). On Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons, you can enjoy original works by local playwrights and directors performed by local actors in a 113-seat "boutique theatre". The price of admission also includes free coffee and desserts from a popular, locally-owned coffee shop.

### **Glynn Academy Players**

The [Glynn Academy Players](#) is an incredibly accomplished group of young performers who stage a series of productions throughout the school year at Glynn Academy's Memorial Auditorium. The level of talent and polish is extraordinary. You can sit through any performance by the Glynn Academy Players and completely forget that these are

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teenage high school students. Their 2019 production of *Rent* earned them a state championship for one-act plays from the Georgia High School Association.

### **The Historic Ritz Theatre**

The Ritz Theatre offers live theatrical performances as part of a wide variety of community events, concerts, recitals, classic movies, exhibits and educational programs. Some are put on by the [Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association](#), who operate the venue. Others are staged by independent producers and organizations.

## Nature and Hiking Trails

Some like to hike. Some like to walk. Some like to meander. Whatever your preference, you'll find lots of opportunity to hoof it in the Golden Isles.

### Earth Day Nature Trail

If you ever get a job offer from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in Brunswick, take it...just because of their spectacular location on the edge of the marsh, overlooking two rivers and the Sidney Lanier Bridge. Failing that, take a walk along the [Earth Day Nature Trail](#). It starts near their front door and meanders through a land, sea and marshscape that will fill your memory bank. It's a self-guided tour featuring boardwalks, bridges, picnic areas and trail notes about your surroundings. See all manner of salt marsh vegetation and wildlife. Ospreys and eagles. Marsh rabbits and egrets. Fiddler crabs and terrapins. The 20' tall observation tower captures views of St. Simons Sound and the Atlantic beyond, with St. Simons Island on one side and Jekyll Island on the other.

### Alice Richards Botanical Trail

For the botanist wannabee, [Alice Richards Botanical Trail](#) is a living museum of native plant species with interactive, descriptive signs. It's even more fun with little ones tagging along, who will enjoy the village of faerie houses and labyrinth. It's located in Frederica Park, the newest park on St. Simons Island, on Lawrence Road about two miles north of the northern roundabout. The park also includes a large playfield for field sports, together with picnic shelters, rest rooms, benches, a children's playground, and dog park.

### Cannon's Point

For serious hikers and bikers (the non-motorized kind), [Cannon's Point](#) can bring hours of outdoor joy along with some history lessons. Over 600 acres on the northeast corner of St. Simons Island, this wilderness area includes maritime forest, salt marshes and tidal creeks. Shell middens created some 4,500 years ago can be found here, along with the remains of John Couper's large plantation home. A boat launch for non-motorized watercraft allows for a fish-eye view of the primitive surroundings.

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St. Simons Land Trust acquired the property in 2012 with significant financial donations from Hank and Wendy Paulson, who own Little St. Simons Island and several other local philanthropists. It is now protected in perpetuity under a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy. The preserve is currently open to the public from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday through Monday.

Visitors to Cannon's Point, as well as other nature trails, should dress appropriately and be aware that some of the airborne residents will view them as lunch. So bring insect repellent and itch relievers, along with water, snacks and other necessities. Leave the flip-flops home.

### **Southeast Georgia Health System Fitness Trail**

Back in 2006, in an effort to keep us all fit and healthy, the [Southeast Georgia Health System](#) opened a fitness trail on Arthur J. Moore Drive behind its St. Simons Immediate Care Center at Gascoigne Bluff. It's a half-mile paved trail that winds through a wooded area, complete with benches and fitness stations. The handicap-accessible trail is open year-round during daylight hours.

### **John Gilbert Nature Trail**

Driving up and down Frederica Road, you might notice a small grassy area near the bend in the road about midway between the mid-island roundabout and Sea Island Road. In addition to a couple of park benches, there's a small wooden bridge and a sign noting the entrance to [John Gilbert Nature Trail](#). This 40-acre marshfront tract was one of the first land donations to the St. Simons Land Trust. Today it's a very popular half-mile trail through forest and wetlands to a viewing platform at the marsh's edge, across from Sea Island. Informative signage along the way enlightens visitors about flora and fauna plus some local history.

## Hang with the Sea Turtles

Every spring and summer, under cover of darkness, they invade our shores. After clambering up the sand past the high tide line, our loggerhead sea turtles lie down to create a “body pit”, dig holes and lay hundreds of eggs. Then it’s back out to sea for a couple of weeks until they come back and do it again. And again...maybe four or five times in a season. Next year they’ll be back—mostly the same turtles—to the same beach location.

With that many eggs left behind, you would think there are lots of loggerheads in the sea. Wrong. Most of the hatchlings never make it to deep water. Too many predators, on land and in the air. Those who do make it to adulthood often get tangled in fishing nets or eat too much plastic, mistaking it for jellyfish. Add in habitat destruction, either man-made or climate change-induced, and the result is an endangered species.

Loggerheads and other sea turtles can get hurt by colliding with boats. They can get an infectious disease or get cold-stunned by sudden temperature drops. Those who are lucky enough to make it to the [Georgia Sea Turtle Center](#) on Jekyll Island have a good chance of survival.

Since its opening in 2007, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center has tended to well over 1,000 sea turtles and even more diamondback terrapins from the nearby marshes. In addition to providing emergency care and rehabilitation, the Center is dedicated to research and public education.

Through a variety of interactive exhibits, visitors to the Center learn about life as a sea turtle...exhilarating journeys through tropical seas along with assorted physical threats. They also get to see inside the treatment room and watch the veterinarians work. In the Rehabilitation Pavilion, home to recuperating turtles, visitors can watch and learn about the current patients.

The Center also offers events and tours for small groups, including Turtles at Twilight, sunrise beach walks, nighttime Turtle Walks in search of nesting turtles, and Ride With Patrols to experience life as a sea turtle researcher. Grade-school kids can enjoy a week-long summer camp filled with turtle adventures and learning opportunities. The Education Department provides outreach programs for schools along with community events.

## If You Like Parks, You'll Love the Golden Isles

Since we specialize in outdoor fun, it's only natural that the Golden Isles would have an abundance of parks. From the small squares in Old Town Brunswick to the 1,100 acre Blythe Island Regional Park, no matter where you choose to live, chances are you'll find a park nearby...often within walking distance.

The larger parks usually include facilities for active and organized sports. There are ball fields and multi-purpose sports fields for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, rugby, and other field sports. Most include playgrounds, restrooms and picnic tables.

If you're looking for a variety of outdoor activities, [Blythe Island Regional Park](#) won't disappoint. Here you'll find a freshwater lake for swimming and fishing, kayak and canoe rentals, along with a marina and boat ramp to access the South Brunswick River. There's also full service vehicular and group camping, picnic pavilions and a playground. Not to mention nature trails for walking and biking, horseshoe courts, volleyball and a field archery range. Enough for a long vacation.

On St. Simons Island, [Gascoigne Bluff Park](#) features the only disc golf course in Glynn County. [Massengale Park](#) and [Neptune Park](#) offer beach access. Although not designated as a park, [Coast Guard Beach](#) has a picnic area, restrooms and showers. Both Massengale and Coast Guard beaches include ADA access mats. [Epworth Park](#), near the island entrance, has tennis and pickleball courts.

In Brunswick, the riverfront [Altamaha Regional Park](#) has campsites and rental cabins, swimming, fishing, boat ramp and a wilderness trail. [Howard Coffin Park](#) has an aquatics center. [Ballard Park](#) offers ball fields, tennis, playground and a gym. Lots to choose from.

Our newest facility, [Veterans Memorial Park](#), is a dramatic, 3-1/2 acre green space in downtown Brunswick with a monument plaza honoring Glynn County veterans who lost their lives in service to our country. Opening ceremonies were held in November, 2020.

The [Glynn County Parks and Recreation Department](#) schedules a variety of activities and games in our parks throughout the year for all ages. They also offer swimming lessons, fitness clinics, aerobics and tai chi, softball leagues, youth basketball, football and soccer.

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And then there's the largest park of all—[Jekyll Island](#). Although it contains residential areas, hotels, restaurants and historic buildings, the entire island is a state park, maintained by the Jekyll Island Authority. Homeowners on Jekyll are just that—homeowners. They don't own the land. They lease it on a long-term basis from the State of Georgia. If you're interested in living on Jekyll Island or owning a vacation property, you will be entering a non-traditional real estate transaction. At [DeLoach Sotheby's International Realty](#), we have experts who know the ins and outs, and we'll be happy to help you find a special place in this natural paradise.

## What's a Terrapin Crossing?

And why don't they have painted lines like pedestrian crossings?

OK, the terrapin crossing signs on our causeways do have turtle images on them, so drivers get it. But what's a terrapin and why do they cross the road?

The Diamondback Terrapin is a species of turtle that lives in brackish water—a mixture of fresh and salt water that's found throughout our marshes. Unlike their giant sea turtle cousins, they're less than a foot in length. They can be found in coastal wetlands all along the US. East and Gulf coasts. Their distinctive, often colorful shells are unique to each animal. No two are alike.

Terrapins spend their lives in the marsh, feasting on crabs, mussels, and most importantly from our point of view—salt marsh snails. These snails like to eat cord grass—the tall variety that defines our marshes. Without terrapins, the snails would overpopulate and devour the grass, leaving nothing but mudflats. The *Muddy Isles* wouldn't be much of a tourist draw.

So the terrapins do need our help. Every year, late spring and early summer brings nesting season. From May through July, female turtles seek out high ground (above the high tide line) to lay their eggs. Our causeways look like the perfect high ground. But they're not. Researchers have reported anywhere from 100 to 400 turtle deaths every year on the Jekyll Island Causeway alone.

These same researchers from the University of Georgia have come up with a partial solution. At turtle crossing "hotspots", they constructed hybrid barriers consisting of short fencing to keep the terrapins off the road and nest boxes that serve both as hatcheries and protection from predators such as raccoons. In addition, the Jekyll Island Causeway now has terrapin crossing signs with lights that flash for two to three hours during high tide, the peak time for terrapin road trips.

So when you're driving along any of our causeways between May and July, please drive extra carefully and keep an eye out for our turtle buddies.



## **Shrimping in the Golden Isles**

The shrimp never had a chance once the Portuguese got here.

Shortly after World War I, a number of Portuguese refugee immigrants arrived in New York. They were experienced fishermen who didn't like the cold weather, so they migrated south. Many of them settled in Fernandina Beach, Florida, where they learned about the newly invented trawl nets that could be dragged behind motorized vessels to harvest shrimp. As the shrimper population increased, some began to explore opportunities a little farther north. They soon found Brunswick, with its excellent harbor and coastal estuaries that were ideal breeding grounds for shrimp.

Soon an industry began to take shape. By the 1930's, the docks of Old Town Brunswick were alive with shrimpers unloading their catch and tending to their boats. With the help of newly developed ice machines, they were able to ship their catch to distant markets including their old port of entry, New York.

The industry thrived up until the 1980's when a combination of rising fuel prices and overseas competition from cheaper, farm-raised shrimp made it harder and harder to make a living. Today, thanks to a cooperative effort to market [Wild Georgia Shrimp](#) with its natural, succulent flavor and firm texture, the shrimping industry is still very much alive in the Golden Isles, although in somewhat reduced numbers.

If you're here during shrimp season, generally from late May to year's end, you will notice the shrimp boats off the local beaches and in the waterways as they make their daily rounds to supply our restaurants and others throughout the state.

### **Shrimpin' on the Lady Jane**

If you want to get a taste of life on a shrimp boat, check out the highly acclaimed tours on the [Lady Jane](#). It's a fun, family outing on an actual, converted shrimp boat that is now a Coast Guard certified passenger vessel. You'll cruise through calm, inland waters surrounding the marshes while the crew drops the trawling net. After each of three drops, the catch is displayed on a large tray and a marine biologist explains the incredible variety of species on board. Passengers are allowed to handle the creatures which can include sharks, horseshoe crabs, puffer fish, flounder, crabs, and countless others. Oh, and shrimp too. All are returned to the sea, including the shrimp.

### **Blessing of the Fleet**

If you plan to be here in early May, don't miss Mayfair, the annual processional in Old Town Brunswick, when local shrimpers honor Our Lady of Fatima. There will be food, drinks, activities and music, culminating in the Blessing of the Fleet. The procession and blessing began in 1938, when one of the original Portuguese shrimpers brought home an intricate wooden replica of the actual statue in Fatima, Portugal. Still on display at St. Francis Catholic Church in Brunswick, the statue is carried every year at the Mayfair celebration. Since then, many other shrimping communities along our coasts have added a similar tradition.

### **How to source your own Wild Georgia Shrimp**

Restaurants all over the Golden Isles serve our local delicacy, as do several retail establishments including the [Anchored Shrimp Company](#), [City Market](#), [Jackie's Seafood Market](#), St. Simons Seafood at 2463 Demere Rd, and Knights Seafood at the docks on 827 Bay Street.

## Enjoy Nature's Beauty on Jekyll Island

On Jekyll Island, you don't have to be Crocodile Dundee to get close to nature.

Jekyll Island is many things. It's a state park. It's a residential community. It's a resort location. It's a convention destination. But most importantly, it's a place dedicated to the conservation and protection of wild species and natural resources. By state law, no more than 35% of Jekyll's land can be developed for any purpose. The remaining 65% is a natural habitat, devoted to protecting and preserving its wildlife and natural vegetation. The [Jekyll Island Authority](#) is charged with managing the island and maintaining a balance between conservation and public access to its natural resources.

Visitors enjoy those natural resources via the island-wide system of self-guided trails and observation facilities. Or they can get professional guidance and information that will enhance the experience.

Serious birdwatchers know that Jekyll Island is located on the Atlantic Migratory Flyway.

### Jekyll Island Trail System

You can hike, bike or stroll along more than 20 miles of pathways and trails throughout the island. There are seaside trails, forest paths, golf course views, and routes through the historic district. [Rental bikes](#) are available at three locations.

### Horton Pond

No signs point the way, but [Horton Pond](#) is a popular spot for watching alligators, turtles and birds from the wheelchair-accessible viewing platform. Depending on the season, you might see full-grown, baby and adolescent alligators up close or sunning on the man-made platform out on the pond. There will likely be plenty of turtles and shorebirds as well.

For walkers with insect repellent, the .7 mile Tupelo Trail loops through maritime forest with benches along the way and plaques describing the native trees and plants. There's also a path through the inland forest to the historic Horton House on the western side of the island.

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To get there, follow Beachview Drive north. When you reach Villas by the Sea on your right, make a left turn onto an unmarked road. From there it's a short distance to roadside parking adjacent to the viewing stand and Tupelo Trail.

### **4-H Tidelands Nature Center**

At [Tidelands Nature Center](#), you can spend time in the exhibit gallery with local marine animals and reptiles and check out their 1,300 gallon aquarium. There's also a birding area with a wildlife viewing platform. You can rent a canoe or sign up for a guided kayak tour of the Jekyll River. They also offer nature walks and other group programs year-round. Before you go, check with their website for the latest updates.

### **Guided Educational Tours**

For a more rewarding, educational and entertaining experience during the winter months (December through March), take a [Ranger Walk](#) with a park ranger for an "eco-experience" along the beaches, maritime forest and marshes of Jekyll Island. There are more than 1,000 acres of maritime forest and 10 miles of shoreline to see. You won't have to walk through all of it, but you will want to see the eagle's nest.

From April through September at Horton Pond, the [Gatorology](#) program treats small groups to a comprehensive lesson about the American alligator and its role in our ecosystem. You might even have your picture taken with a baby gator. If you want to know more, see [How to Get Along with Gators](#) at 31-81 – *The Magazine of Jekyll Island*.

## Postell – Park or Market?

Driving down Beachview Drive in the Pier Village on a normal midweek day, you might easily cruise by Postell Park and not even know it's there. Unless you notice the small sign that says "Postell Market", directing you into its parking lot. Then you would search in vain for the market. Instead, you would find the rear entrance to our Casino building, with its interior courtyard, library and a small, 100-seat theatre that's home to the Island Players.

But if you're there on a Show weekend, not only will you easily spot Postell Market (now filled with exhibitors' tents), you'll be glad you stopped by. If it's springtime, you might encounter the annual Art in the Park Fine Art & Craft Festival hosted by [Glynn Visual Arts](#). You can shop under the oaks for an endless variety of handmade art treasures. Paintings and drawings, photography, jewelry, sculpture, ceramics and textiles are always available, along with innovative, one-of-a-kind creations that you will never see in a store. Oh, and there's also freshly prepared food and kids' crafts.

If you're into antiques, the [St. Simons Island Antique Show](#) appears in Postell Park at least seven times during our warmer months—that would be March through November—including Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. Exhibitors include antiques dealers from throughout the Southeast. In addition to furniture, there's jewelry, silverware, glassware and collectibles, vintage art, and some miscellaneous oddities. There's also food that's definitely not antique.

Because there are so many talented artisans in the Golden Isles, the show you are most likely to see is [Crafts in the Village](#). It's held on as many as 14 weekends from April through December. You'll find an endless variety of handmade art, jewelry, candles, décor items, specialty foods and spirited conversations with their creators.

Although locals refer to the site as Postell Park, its official name was changed to Postell Market after an extensive renovation in 2011. And truth be told, it's more like a market than a park. Except on weekdays.

## **The Golden Isles Social Scene**

If you like to socialize, you'll love the Golden Isles. If you don't like to socialize, living here will likely change your mind.

Maybe it's something in the air. The beach. The relaxed lifestyle. Whatever. People in the Golden Isles are more outgoing and neighborly. And they love getting together in any number of different ways. They show up at social clubs, shared interest groups, civic clubs, business groups, and lots of nonprofits.

### **For new arrivals**

Not long after you move in (or maybe before) someone is sure to tell you about the [Island Newcomers Club](#). As the name implies, its reason for being is to help you make new friends through a variety of meetups, trips, activities, coastal education walks and volunteering. There's a three-year limit on membership, but after that...

### **After you get sand in your shoes**

When you're no longer a newbie, you can join the Sandpipers. Their meetings "are typically parties with no agenda other than good food and fun with friends".

### **Dig we must**

If you enjoy gardening (warning—there's work involved), several clubs throughout the Golden Isles will help you get your hands dirty. They will also educate you on native plants and environmental issues. They are very community-minded, with cleanup and beautification events, flower shows and sales, historic preservation and tours.

### **Shared interest groups**

No matter what floats your boat, you're likely to find others here who share your passion. There are groups and organizations catering to artisans, runners, astronomy, dance, boating and sailing, cycling, gymnastics, woodworkers, yoga, writers and artists, graduates of certain schools, book clubs, a variety of sports, and much more.

## **Volunteers are always welcome**

If you're inclined to give of your time and/or expertise, there are countless opportunities in the Golden Isles to contribute...and meet some amazing people in the process. Almost all the social and shared interest groups provide volunteer activities. For over 100 years, the [Brunswick Woman's Club](#) members have been volunteering and raising funds for community improvements in virtually all aspects of Golden Isles life. [Family Connection Glynn](#) is a collaborative of local nonprofits focused on children and families. Their monthly meetings are open to non-members. The Island Newcomers Club has an [extensive list](#) of area nonprofits that need volunteer help; and as lengthy as it is, it's not complete. Elegant Island Living magazine also maintains a list of "[CommUNITY Connections](#)"

Another option is to join a traditional service club. Local chapters include the [Golden Isles Rotary Club](#), [The Rotary Club of Brunswick, Georgia](#), the [Rotary Club of St. Simons Island](#), the [Golden Isles Lions Club](#), and the [Kiwanis Club of Brunswick](#).

## Camps for Kids in the Golden Isles

Most people call it summertime. Parents call it “what do we do with the kids time”.

If you’re lucky enough to live in the Golden Isles, there are plenty of answers. Our summer camps cater to almost any interest or activity. There are sports camps, nature camps, visual and performing arts camps, special interest camps, and multi-activity camps.

Camps are far more than a keep-the-kids-occupied solution. They help children grow and develop in many ways. For starters, they reduce screen time and help kids make new friends...in person. Campers gain independence and self-confidence while having memorable adventures and learning new skills. They learn about teamwork and resiliency. And here in the Golden Isles, they have endless ways to connect with nature.

For budding athletes, our sports and fitness camps put some serious fun into exercise. The [Glynn County Recreation and Parks Department](#) is a good place to start. They manage a wide variety of competitions and lessons for both children and adults in baseball, football, softball, soccer, track, tennis, basketball and others. Swimming lessons are available in Glynn County’s public pools at Howard Coffin Park and Selden Park in Brunswick, and Neptune Park on St. Simons Island.

Local nonprofits, churches, clubs and commercial enterprises all operate camps. Most offer a variety of activities. Others concentrate on specific skills development.

[Glynn Visual Arts](#) holds art camps on weekday mornings. Topics can include whimsical art, clay and collage three-dimensional art, mixed media, and wearable sculptures.

[Frederica Academy](#) adds their own art focused camps on photography and painting.

[Coastal Outdoor Adventures](#) specializes in fishing trips, biology camp and the very popular, 2-day Sharkfest.

The [Georgia 4-H center at Camp Jekyll](#) hosts a variety of nature-oriented camps, including the weeklong Cloverleaf Camp (dates vary by county)



## Life in the Golden Isles

The [YMCA of Coastal Georgia Summer Day Camp](#) features crafts, sports, indoor and outdoor games.

For young animal lovers, the children's camps at [Three Oaks Horse Farm and Petting Zoo](#) include horseback riding, games, petting zoo and a trip to Jekyll Island.

Young sailor wannabes can learn the basics at [Golden Isles Community Sailing Center](#).

Although not technically a camp, the [Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Georgia](#) offers a variety of developmental and educational activities for area youth in ten facilities throughout the Golden Isles.

## **Jekyll Island Historic District**

If you were to time-travel back to the 1890's with about \$600 in your pocket, you could join the Jekyll Island Club, a seaside getaway like no other. But first you would have to make friends with the likes of Joseph Pulitzer, William Rockefeller, JP Morgan, William K Vanderbilt, Marshall Field, and a few others. Emphasis on few, because the Club was limited to 100 members. Exclusivity and all that.

If however, you're stuck in the present, you can visit the clubhouse and the elegant homes built by several of the members. The former clubhouse is today's Jekyll Island Club Hotel. The homes located on either side of the hotel are now part of a 240-acre Jekyll Island Club National Historic Landmark District. The original club members referred to these not-so-modest dwellings as "cottages"; and cottages they were, compared to their owners' palaces in New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Mosaic, the district's museum, recreates the island's past with interactive exhibits and displays. It's also the starting point for scheduled tours of the cottages, Faith chapel and the Landmark Trolley Tour.

### **The Duck Hunting Trip That Wasn't**

With so many Gilded Age tycoons on hand, it's not surprising that Jekyll Island was the scene of some notable events. One evening in November 1910, Senator Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island convened a group of bankers and financiers on an ultra-secret train trip from Hoboken, New Jersey to the south Georgia coast and on to Jekyll Island for "a duck hunting trip". No ducks were harmed, but after about a week, they had devised a new currency system for the United States that led directly to the formation of the Federal Reserve System.

### **Mr. Watson, are you there?**

On January 25, 1915, Alexander Graham Bell in New York spoke with his assistant, Thomas Watson in San Francisco, some 38 years after they had the world's first telephone conversation in Bell's Boston laboratory. It was the first transcontinental phone call, and included among others, President Woodrow Wilson in Washington, along with AT&T president Theodore Vail and J.P. Morgan at Vail's residence on Jekyll Island. According to an article in the New York Times of January 26, 1915, "Telephones in

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New York, Jekyll (sic) Island, Washington, and San Francisco were all on one big loop, and while persons in any two of the places were talking, hundreds in the four places were listening to the conversation.”

### **What financiers started, a financial panic ended**

As the Great Depression of the 1930's spread, the rich and powerful were not immune, and Club membership continued to decline. Then came World War II and the presence of German U-boats just offshore. In March of 1942, the Club closed for good. Five years later, the state of Georgia purchased the property with the intention of creating a state park. Despite their efforts, the area languished and the clubhouse and cottages fell into disrepair. That began to change in the 1970's when the Jekyll Island Authority began restoring several buildings. Their efforts accelerated after the area achieved national landmark status in 1978. In 1987, the renovated Jekyll Island Club Hotel opened to the public.

## Camping in the Golden Isles

Want to escape the real world for a while? Join the many happy campers who have savored the joys of outdoor life in the Golden Isles.

You don't necessarily have to rough it. We have "primitive campsites" for those who want to pitch a tent. We have places to take your RV. And if you want to retain most of the comforts of home but still say you went camping, we have a "glamping" site that you will not want to leave. (For the uninitiated, that's "glamorous camping".)

If you want to be one with nature, but not too far from civilization, campgrounds with tent sites are available in Brunswick at [Blythe Island Regional Park](#). Also available at this 1,100 acre public park are picnic pavilions, a playground, nature trails, freshwater lake for swimming and fishing, boat and kayak rentals and a dock with access to the South Brunswick River. For the RV crowd, there are hook-ups with full facilities, including bath houses, showers, laundry and Wi-Fi everywhere. A 21<sup>st</sup> century Walden Pond.

For a little more wilderness, travel about 15 miles north on US 341 to [Altamaha Regional Park](#). The Altamaha River, "Georgia's little Amazon", covers 137 miles through south central Georgia to the Atlantic Ocean just north of Brunswick. Park visitors can enjoy swimming, fishing, boating on the river and wilderness trails. Rental cabins are available, along with tent and RV campsites.

If you're looking for a more traditional RV park with full hook-ups, try the [Southern Retreat RV Park](#) or the [Coastal Georgia RV Resort](#). Both are located near exit 29 on I-95, convenient to Jekyll Island, Brunswick and St. Simons Island.

Sadly, no overnight camping or campfires are allowed on Golden Isles beaches. But campers on Jekyll Island can get pretty close. [Jekyll Island Campground](#) is located on the northern end of the island, about a half-mile from Driftwood Beach and Clam Creek Picnic Area and Fishing Pier. An 18-acre wooded site, it includes full RV hook-ups, and 12 primitive tent sites. There's also a general store, pavilion, and a bird sanctuary. Bike rentals are available.

Last, but certainly not least, there's glamping. "Where stunning nature meets modern luxury", says Glamping.com. [Little Raccoon Key](#) is a ten-minute boat ride from Jekyll Harbor Marina. There's only one overnight reservation, so once you arrive, it becomes

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your own private island, complete with a weatherproof 26 X 15 foot luxury canvas tent. This is no ordinary tent. Inside you'll find a memory foam mattress, wood-burning stove, cooking utensils, towels and toiletries. And just so you'll remember that you're "camping", the toilet and shower are outside. Day trips and fishing expeditions to Little Raccoon Key are also available on select dates.

## Summertime Fun in the Golden Isles

Here in the Golden Isles, our mild climate means we can have lots of outdoor activities well beyond summer. But summertime is still special, and the longer days give us more time to enjoy everything. Here's to a season of summer fun.

### Outdoor Music

Bring your lawn chairs and some munchables to the St. Simons Lighthouse or Mary Ross Waterfront Park on a Sunday evening and hang out with your music-loving neighbors. Local and out-of-town bands, some with Top 40 credentials, will tickle your eardrums.

On St. Simons Island. The Coastal Georgia Historical Society offers [A Little Light Music](#), on the lighthouse lawn. In Brunswick, the [Downtown Development Authority](#) hosts Rhythm on the River, a free monthly concert at Mary Ross Waterfront Park in Brunswick.

### Search for a Sea Breeze

Wherever you choose to live in the Golden Isles, you won't be far from a beach. The best spots on St. Simons for parking and facilities are the Coast Guard Beach and Massengale Park. Both have picnic areas, restrooms and showers. Massengale has shade trees and a children's playground. Coast Guard Beach has a concession stand open in summer. Gould's Inlet has a nice beach, but limited parking and strong currents because it's an inlet. Swimmers should stay close to shore.

Jekyll Island has seven public beach parks from Driftwood Beach in the north to St. Andrew's Beach Park in the south. Also at the very northern tip of the island, east of the Clam Creek Picnic Area and Fishing Pier, is another picturesque beach with a view of St. Simons Island across the inlet. It's fun to walk, but again dangerous to swim because of the very strong currents.

Strong currents at the inlets and occasional rip currents off the beaches occur because of our unusually wide tidal swings of 6 to 9 feet. As a result, there's a lot more beach at low tide. So if you sit near the water's edge, be aware of the incoming tide or you'll have a wet blanket.

## **Get wet**

If relaxing poolside is your thing, Neptune Park on St. Simons Island offers that plus a fun children's water gym and wading pool. There's also a lap pool for your daily exercise. The Brunswick Aquatics Center has a water slide and kiddie pool. The Selden Park Pool has lap lanes. All pools have lifeguards, and all offer swimming lessons.

For thrill-seekers, the Summer Waves Water Park on Jekyll Island has more action than you can shake a pool noodle at. If you dare, try the Man o' War, a four-slide concoction that's sure to boost your adrenalin. At the opposite extreme is Turtle Creek, a slow-moving stream that's great for floaters.

## **Sea Turtle Walks**

Whether you're an early-riser or a night owl, there's a turtle walk for you. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island conducts guided nighttime walks during nesting season in June and July. In August, walks are scheduled in the early morning to look for recently hatched nests. Either way, you will learn a lot about the life of a sea turtle, threats to its environment, and what you can do to help. Group sizes are very limited, and reservations are a must.

## Get on Your Horse

Let's hit the beach...on a horse. Or maybe go into the marsh without stepping in it. How about riding through a maritime forest? Or just take an old-fashioned carriage ride. It's all here. Horseback riding is yet another way to savor the pleasures of our Golden Isles.

On Jekyll Island, courtesy of [Golden Isles Carriage and Trail at Three Oaks Farm](#), your mount will "walk" through a nature trail, across some marsh and end up prancing along Driftwood Beach. At their Clam Creek Road location on the island's north end, you can sign up for public rides throughout the day, including sunset and moonlight rides. They also offer private rides for groups of varying sizes. At Three Oaks Farm, not far from Exit 29 on I-95, they give lessons to all age groups and skill levels, along with day and overnight camps for children. Horse owners can choose from a variety of boarding options.

St. Simons Island is home to [The Stables at Frederica](#), where you can take a guided tour through the marsh, along the beach, or into a maritime forest. The little ones can ride a gentle pony around the facility. The Stables also offers full-care boarding services, a riding school with classes for everyone from newbies to experienced riders, and horse camps for kids during summer, holidays and school breaks.

About four miles west of I-95 exit 29, just off U.S 82, the [Golden Isles Riding Academy](#) is a haven for horse lovers of all ages. It's a 50-acre facility that includes a competition size riding ring, plus a smaller ring, stalls, farrier station and miles of trails. Their family-oriented approach includes private, group and show lessons. They also give custom lessons to address specific issues or develop a particular skill. Boarding facilities and professional training for show horses and access to shows are all available here. They even offer driving lessons if you want to operate your own horse and buggy.

About ten miles farther west on U.S. 82, turn north on Post Road for one and a half miles to [Pine Haven Stables](#). Owned by a lifelong St. Simons Island resident, Pine Haven offers riding lessons for all ages and skill levels, plus coaching and camps. For horse owners, they provide boarding and training. They have both indoor and outdoor riding arenas; so weather can't stop the fun.



### **Carriage Tours**

If you prefer not to saddle up, you can enjoy the magic of an old-fashioned carriage ride through Jekyll Island's Historic District. [Three Oaks Carriage Service](#) offers narrated daytime tours and private evening tours. Or how about a narrated historic tour with afternoon tea at the Jekyll Island Hotel dining room? You can also rent carriage service for weddings, birthday parties, special events, tours and other activities.

## **Our Diverse Nonprofit Community Helps Everyone**

As you settle into your Golden Isles home, you'll start to meet some of the many devoted and selfless people who dedicate their lives to helping others. They staff and volunteer for a seemingly endless list of organizations that work to improve the community, help those in distress, and make life better for all of us.

Some look after our natural resources—the forests, rivers, marshes, estuaries and ocean. Others work to bring families out of poverty, improving their health and well-being. They save abused and neglected children, including those who have been trafficked. Many work to improve our educational resources and make learning opportunities available to all. Some focus on nourishing the creative, cultural and artistic environment. Our churches and religious organizations offer all manner of programs that help the entire community.

### **Help for Vulnerable Families**

There are so many agencies dedicated to helping families, it can be confusing for those who need help, and difficult for the agencies to avoid overlap and duplication of services. [Family Connection of Glynn County](#) solves all that. Part of a statewide network, it operates as a collaborative of state and local agencies, non-profits, faith based organizations, business and the general public. Via monthly meetings, outreach programs, and constant communication among its members, Family Connection insures that the appropriate services reach the families and children who need them.

[Coastal Georgia Area Community Action Authority](#) provides an array of services designed to help needy individuals and families become self-sufficient. Their services include early childhood education, weatherization measures for homes to increase their energy efficiency and safety, job training and placement, plus counseling to help with life's everyday issues and problems.

[Morningstar Children and Family Services](#) offers both residential and community counseling for young people including “mental health assessments, treatment planning, crisis intervention, therapy services, medication management, and more”. They also offer a special education program together with Glynn County Schools.

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## **Preserving Our Environment**

Since 2000, the [St. Simons Land Trust](#) has been acquiring properties for preservation and public access as parks, nature trails and outdoor sports. Their mission is “to protect our scenic and historic treasures and to preserve the beauty and charm of our island for generations to come”.

[One Hundred Miles](#) is dedicated to protecting our approximately 100 miles of shoreline, as well as the adjacent marshes and wetlands. They provide education to engage citizens and advocate on behalf of conservation issues.

## **Culture and the Arts**

The [Coastal Georgia Historical Society](#) preserves our history at the Lighthouse Museum and nearby A.W. Jones Heritage Center, along with the World War II Home Front Museum at Coast Guard Beach.

[Glynn Visual Arts](#) encourages local artists through art education, exhibitions, festivals, and an exhibit hall where members can display and sell their work.

## **Help and Support Wherever Needed**

You can name almost any community need, and there’s a nonprofit here in the Golden Isles to address it. [Safe Harbor Children’s Center](#) cares for abused, abandoned, neglected and homeless children. The [Boys & Girls Club of Southeast Georgia](#) operates eleven facilities for kids and teens, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances...helping them to complete their schooling and become productive citizens. [Hand in Hand of Glynn](#) builds “tiny homes” for the homeless. [Habitat for Humanity](#) builds affordable homes for low-income families. The [Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia](#) and [No Kill Glynn County](#) look out for unwanted and abandoned dogs and cats. [Glynn Community Crisis Center](#) serves victims of domestic violence and their children through their shelter, Amity House, plus a crisis hotline, transitional living and additional programs.

## **Funding Support**

There are several public and private foundations that contribute to local needs. Among the most noteworthy are...

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- The [Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation](#) is the largest public foundation in the area, serving Glynn, McIntosh and Camden counties. It serves as both a grant maker and a conduit for local philanthropists who wish to support specific causes.
- The [Davis Love Foundation](#) directs proceeds from the PGA's RSM Classic to local agencies that focus on children and families in need.
- As in other communities, The [United Way of Coastal Georgia](#) funds a variety of area nonprofits.

Although there's no way to communicate the full breadth of foundation and nonprofit contributions to the Golden Isles, *Elegant Island Living* magazine has compiled an [extensive list](#). The [Island Newcomers Club](#) publishes a long list of volunteer opportunities.

## **Any Questions?**

One of the reasons we love our work at DeLoach Sotheby's International Realty is that we get to talk about this beautiful and vibrant area all the time...and share our knowledge with people who want to live in the Golden Isles. So if you have any questions about anything here or need any advice from a local, please give us a call at (912) 638-0406 or email [Frank.DeLoach@SIR.com](mailto:Frank.DeLoach@SIR.com).

And when you're ready to talk about real estate options, here's the plan. First of all, we'll listen. We'll ask questions. We'll learn everything we can about what will make you happy. Then we'll show you around. We'll use both our real estate expertise and local knowledge to help you find what's right for you. And after you close and move in, we'll continue to have your back. Thank you for considering us.