

Edisto Island National Scenic Byway

For a variety of views from the sparkling waters of Edisto Bay to the green foliage native to the South, drive the Edisto Island Scenic Byway on SC 174.

Length: 16.79 miles / 26.9 km



Local Information

The entire route is paved and accommodates two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles.

Visitor Services



Accessibility

* The majority of public facilities are accessible, including Edisto Beach State Park, the Chamber of Commerce, Welcome Center, Edisto Bookstore and gas stations/restrooms. * Edisto Beach State Park offers the state's longest system of accessible trails. * Both local library branches and the island's three shopping centers are accessible. * Six public access points for Edisto Beach are handicapped-friendly and the Fire Department has beach wheelchairs available.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

Edisto offers bicyclists and pedestrians year-round opportunities for enjoying scenic views. Many of the trails, including those at Edisto Beach State Park, can be accessed from the scenic byway. The portion of the byway with bike lanes (from the Colleton County line into the Town of Edisto Beach) links to a 10-mile loop bordered by shops, restaurants, houses and the beach. Many visitors park their cars and spend the day – or week – walking or biking to their Edisto Beach destinations. Rental shops offer bikes, child seats, pull carts and fun options like tandem bicycles and adult tricycles.



Food

Stop at Kings open-air market, featuring fresh produce picked from adjacent fields and Edisto Island Museum.



Gasoline

Gasoline is available.



Information

* The Edisto Chamber of Commerce, located at 430 Hwy 174, is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays and offers an outdoor kiosk. * The Edisto Beach Welcome Center, located at 101 Jungle Rd., is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays. * The Edisto Beach State Park Interpretive Center, located at 8377 State Cabin Rd., is open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tues. - Sat. and offers an outdoor kiosk, nature walks, and exhibits. * The Edisto Bookstore, located at Edisto Center (547 Hwy 174), is open 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mon. - Sat., 1 - 6 p.m. Sun. during the summer, and 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon. - Sat. in the winter.



Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



Retail

The portion of the byway with bike lanes (from the Colleton County line into the Town of Edisto Beach) links to a 10-mile loop bordered by shops, restaurants, houses and the beach.

Special Considerations

The byway's two-lane paved surface and bridges accommodate 2-wheel-drive vehicles and are well maintained, with appropriate signage and road markings. Elevations are minimal, temperatures mild (no snow or ice).

Restrictions

No restrictions beyond the usual weight standards (vehicles must be under 73,280 pounds). There are no restrictions on size or bridge weight loads.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Spring and fall are ideal times to enjoy Edisto Island's breathtaking scenic views, cooler temperatures and serene beauty.

High Season

The "high season" for byway visitors is Memorial Day through Labor Day, with peaks occurring on those weekends and on the Fourth of July.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

- The byway starts at the McKinley Washington, Jr., Bridge, about 6 miles from the intersection of SC 174 and SC 162.

Edisto Island National Scenic Byway

- Follow SC 174 south to Edisto Beach for 17 miles.
- The byway ends at Edisto Beach, near the main entrance to Edisto State Beach State Park and the intersection of SC 174 and Palmetto Blvd.

Getting to the Byway

Directions to Edisto Island National Scenic Byway are unavailable at this time.

Road Trip: A Scenic Ramble on "Edis-slow" Island

Departure: McKinley Washington, Jr. Bridge, South Carolina

Destination: Atlantic Ocean at Edisto Beach State Park, South Carolina

Time to allow: 1 day

A peaceful barrier island off the South Carolina coast, Edisto Island seems to have stopped the clock 50 years ago. SC 174 is a meandering 17-mile two-lane road that stretches from the Intracoastal Waterway to Edisto Beach. Along the way are salt marshes, forests, farm fields and historic churches – the living patchwork of the Lowcountry. Explore 1800's graveyards, catch blue crabs with a chicken neck, fill your pockets with seashells and sharks' teeth, and photograph the perfect sunset — all in one day. Buy fresh produce at a roadside stand and fresh seafood dockside for a picnic on the beach. Watch for dolphins breaking the surface and strings of brown pelicans overhead. But most of all, take your time and breathe deep: this "Edis-slow ramble" is a visual delight, and you will find much to soothe the spirit and awaken the senses.

Day 1

- **Start: McKinley Washington, Jr. Bridge**

Begin your exploration with a truly breathtaking view of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from the crest of McKinley Washington, Jr. Bridge. You can park and stand in the lane along the railing of the bridge — but bring your camera and binoculars.



You won't want to miss the water sparkling off the vast salt marshes or visits by the resident bald eagles.

Stretching more than 1,000 miles along the Eastern Seaboard from Norfolk, VA, to Key West, FL, the Atlantic portion of the Intracoastal Waterway is a kind of "marine highway" for yachts making their way from Florida to New York (and points north) in the spring and reversing the voyage in the fall. To the east is the North Edisto River promising inspiring sunrises. To the west is Watts Cut and the waters off Jehosee Island offering beautiful sunsets.

- **Stop 1: Dawhoo Landing**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.8 mi (1.3 km)

Directions: Traveling to the base of the bridge on the Edisto side, continue on SC 174 for 0.4 miles and turn right on Rosa Scott Road. Continue up the drive for .8 miles to the Dawhoo Landing parking lot. Ample parking.

Suggested time at this stop: 45 minutes

Above you towers the sweeping McKinley Washington, Jr. Bridge and in front of you – viewed from eye-level this time – is the Intracoastal Waterway. Walk out on the public fishing pier and see what's biting. You can see boats being launched and pleasure craft passing by, each with an audience of brown pelicans perched atop pilings. Boats returning with their catches can expect to be greeted by clamoring seagulls. Want to catch your own? Edisto's three gas stations, all on SC 174 Scenic Highway, sell bait, coolers, basic fishing gear, ring nets for crabbing and cast nets for shrimping. Fishing is year round, while crabbing is best in spring and fall. Shrimp runs peak September through November. Dawhoo Landing provides three picnic sites with water views.

- **Stop 2: Russell Creek Overlook and Historic Windsor House**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 1.5 mi (2.4 km)

Directions: Continue on SC 174 for about 1.5 miles, just past Russell Creek Drive.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Continuing on past agricultural fields planted in corn, hay or pasture you arrive at Russell Creek bridge overlook, which is near a Civil War crossing. Although there is parking at both ends of the bridge, it is best to cross the bridge and park on the right. Bring binoculars, a birding book and camera. Walk back to the bridge and view historic Windsor House (circa 1858), which was occupied during the Civil War by Union soldiers. Egret, heron and other wading shore birds are plentiful. You can also see local residents fishing and crabbing here. Depending upon the time and season, you may see a shrimp boat docked across the creek.

- **Stop 3: King's Farm Market**



From previous stop: 4 minutes / 1.6 mi (2.6 km)

Directions: Continue for 1.6 miles along SC 174 (past Gun Bluff and Brick House Roads).

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Continuing, you come to King's Farm Market on your right. Edisto residents continue to live close to the land and local vegetables, fruits, and flowers are central to that rural lifestyle. All are grown seasonally at King's. In spring, early tomatoes and tomato pie are eagerly anticipated. In summer, fresh sweet corn, blueberries, butterbeans and okra are among the choices. In fall, apples, boiled peanuts, squash and pumpkins round out the season. Winter brings fresh Christmas trees and wreaths, jams and jellies. You may also find eggs, bacon, fresh-baked bread and cookies, and other delicacies at King's. It's a good place to meet local residents and see a reminder of Edisto's rich farming tradition. There is ample parking. The Market is open March to December, seven days a week.

- **Stop 4: Edisto Island Museum**



From previous stop: 3 minutes / 0.9 mi (1.4 km)

Directions: Continue on SC 174 for .9 miles (past Maxie Road and Edisto Oak Lane). Look for the museum sign on the right (intersection of SC 174 and Chisolm Plantation Road). Turn right at the sign and go 100 yards, the parking lot is on your left.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Next stop is the Edisto Island Museum. Exhibits, interactive displays and artifacts give you a sweeping view of three hundred years of human history on Edisto, while sharks' teeth and other fossils provide a glimpse of pre-history. You will learn about Native Americans who harvested the soil and sea, Spanish priests who founded a mission and Spanish pirates who sailed up the North Edisto River to burn and pillage. Early English settlers came to make their fortunes in rice and indigo, hitting it rich with world-famous Sea Island cotton. Africans came in chains to work the plantations – but their culture survived despite great adversity. It is to the Africans, who became the majority on Edisto, that Edisto owes its inclusion in the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The Museum is open 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. An admission fee is charged. The Museum hosts a number of annual events for the public. There is ample parking.

- **Stop 5: The Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.7 mi (1.1 km)

Directions: Continue on SC 174 for .7 miles (past Steamboat Landing Road). The church is on the left.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

The next stop is one of the island's true gems, the Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the church is on your left about one mile from the Edisto Island Museum. The congregation began meeting in 1695 and was formally established in 1710. Framed by moss-draped historic oaks, the Sanctuary was built in 1831 and was restored in 2003. In the large graveyard are headstones, spires and monuments dating back to the late 1800s. A stop at the Fellowship Hall to see the church secretary will provide you with a printed tour of the cemetery.

This stop has great visual interest and attracts many photographers.

- **Stop 6: Sweetgrass Basket Stand**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 1 mi (1.6 km)

Directions: Continue one mile on SC 174. The basket stand is on the left.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Continuing our theme of scenic beauty and treats for the eye, the roadside stand for Edisto's famous sweetgrass basketmakers is one mile down SC 174 Scenic Highway. This tradition was transported across the Atlantic from Africa to the South Carolina Lowcountry. The baskets, emerging from their plantation roots, have now become a much-sought-after art form. A reflection of the Gullah heritage of so many of the island's residents, the finely-made coiled baskets are created from local sweetgrass, pine needles, bull rush and palms. The graceful lines and subtle colors of the baskets lend themselves to photography – but please ask first. The stand is open most days year-round, late morning to early afternoon (especially weekends).

- **Stop 7: Live Oak Canopy at the Old Community Center**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.1 mi (0.2 km)

Directions: Proceed one mile from the sweetgrass basket stand on SC 174) to the Old Community Center, the white building on the right.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

Perhaps Edisto's signature scenic feature is the majestic live oak canopy that lines roads and properties. The living archway, which shades large sections of the SC 174 Scenic Highway, is worth a stop for closer examination – and, of course, to take photos.

Of the numerous places to pull off of the roadway, consider a stop at the old Community Center, located on the right a mile from the sweetgrass basket stand. Look closely. If the weather has been dry you will see shrunken and dead plants clinging to the branches of the stately oaks. If it has rained recently, the same plants will be lush and green. In the South Carolina Lowcountry, this plant is called the resurrection fern – an island favorite.

- **Stop 8: Old First Baptist Church**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.3 mi (0.5 km)

Directions: Continue on SC 174 for 0.3 miles (past Oak Island Road).

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

A short distance down Highway 174 is the pride of Edisto's African American community: Old First Baptist Church (circa 1818). The oldest church building on Edisto, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This church was founded by a woman, Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend. Baptists had worshipped on Edisto since 1686, but there was no church. In 1811, Mrs. Townsend obtained the original church site and through her efforts the building was erected. In the late 1860s the trustees turned the church over to the predominately black congregation, which has operated it continuously to date.

- **Stop 9: Trinity Episcopal Church**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.7 mi (1.1 km)

Directions: Continue for .7 miles on SC 174 (just past Indigo Hill Road).

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Trinity Episcopal Church (circa 1881) is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This small chapel, which was nearly destroyed in the 1893 hurricane, now has a serene home in the azalea-filled fenced churchyard. Oral history has it that the magnificent wood-paneled interior was crafted by a freed slave. There are many possibilities here for photography or for simply soaking up the restful atmosphere.

- **Stop 10: Bailey's Store**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.7 mi (1.1 km)

Directions: Continue .7 miles on SC 174 to the intersection with Westcott Road. The building is on the left, at 1444 Highway 174.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Now in the center of Edisto Island, you come to historic Bailey's Store (circa late 1880s). Once a general store adjacent to the Island's Post Office, it is now home to With These Hands Gallery, which includes the work of local crafters and artists. Situated on Store Creek, Bailey's overlooks an active fishing and crabbing spot. Like so many of Edisto's scenic views, this stop offers a blend of natural beauty, history and human activity.

- **Stop 11: Marsh View to Botany Bay Road and Allen AME Church**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.4 mi (0.6 km)

Directions: Continue 0.4 miles on SC 174. There is a pull-off for parking and viewing on the left.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

Edisto Island Open Land Trust preserves a scenic and historic tract of land on the left side of SC 174 just past the Edisto Island Serpentarium. There is room to park and a creekside trail – take your camera and stretch your legs. You can see and photograph remnants of the old “King's Highway” built in colonial times as well as marshlands, Botany Bay Road and the Allen AME Church in the distance. Wading birds frequent the creek and marshes. The color of the marsh changes seasonally, adding to the visual interest.

- **Stop 12: Edisto Beach State Park Interpretive Center**



From previous stop: 7 minutes / 4.4 mi (7.0 km)

Directions: Continue on SC 174 for 2.7 miles, turning right on Palmetto Road at the Interpretive Center/Live Oak Landing sign. Continue on for 1.4 miles to Oyster Row Lane, turning left at the Interpretive Center sign. Go an additional 0.3 miles to the Interpretive Center sign — the driveway is on the right.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

The next stop gives you an inside look at Edisto’s distinctive natural history and scenic wonders while also allowing you to experience an award-winning “green” education center.

About five miles from the previous stop, the Edisto Beach State Park Interpretive Center also serves as the welcome center for the internationally-known ACE Basin. Exhibits and programs focus on the ACE Basin ecosystem (which includes Edisto Island) and rangers provide information on field trips for birders, boaters, hikers and others. The center has interactive displays, a touch tank and nature walks for all ages on topics such as loggerhead sea turtles, sharks, sea and bird life. Late summer is a particularly good time to see nesting loggerheads. Outside of the Interpretive Center are nature trails and a boat launch on Big Bay Creek. The park boasts the longest handicapped-friendly hiking and biking trails in the state, including one leading to a Native American shell midden. The trails wind among maritime forest and marshes, providing good nature-viewing all year long. The Interpretive Center and two adjacent trails have no admission fee.

• **Stop 13: View of Jeremy Cay and Big Bay Creek from Bike Path**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.1 mi (0.2 km)

Directions: Park your car at Edisto Beach State Park and take the biking/walking trail about 200 yards along the causeway toward Edisto Beach.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Edisto Island has more than 10 miles of bike/pedestrian trails that can take you all around Edisto Beach, past houses, the beach, the marsh, shops and restaurants. You can also do some wonderful nature-watching from portions of the bike trail — remember to take your camera, binoculars and birding book.

One scenic stop can be accessed from the parking lot at Edisto Beach State Park. Just proceed a few hundred yards down the bike path to the causeway that connects Edisto Island to Edisto Beach. There, views of the marsh, wading birds, and tidal creeks greet you. If you feel energetic, continue on to Jungle Road and turn right into the small shopping district. Continue on the bike trail through a residential district and go right to the end of the Island — some three miles away. Then loop around past Bell Buoy Park and enjoy the views of shrimp boats on the creek. Along the bike trail you will find waterside restaurants, places to buy fresh seafood, bait and tackle shops, tour headquarters and kayak rental shops. Stay on the bike trail to return to your starting point at Edisto Beach State Park.

A full bike tour of the Town of Edisto Beach — nearly 10 miles of trails — can take 1.5 hours or more depending upon stops along the way.

- **End: Atlantic Ocean at Edisto Beach State Park**



From previous stop: 4 minutes / 2.6 mi (4.2 km)

Directions: From the bike trail view of Jeremy Cay, return to the State Park parking and retrace your steps out to SC 174, where you will turn right. Continue on SC 174 to the intersection with Palmetto Boulevard. You will see the Atlantic Ocean ahead and the Main (Day Use) Entrance to Edisto Beach State Park on your left.

Leaving the State Park's Interpretive Center/Live Oak Landing area, return to SC 174 and turn right. Continue into the Town of Edisto Beach to the intersection of SC 174 and Palmetto Boulevard. You are now at the Atlantic Ocean and the end of the byway. It is truly an inspiring view, with sand and saltwater ahead and – on your left – the Main (or Day Use) Entrance to Edisto Beach State Park. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corp during the Depression, the historic 1,255 acre park is known for its peaceful atmosphere and family beach (where hunting for seashells, sharks' teeth and fossils is a favorite pastime). The park has beachside and salt marsh camping, cabins, boardwalks, grills, picnic tables, restrooms and showers. There is ample parking. It is the perfect place to relax and reflect on the day's memories of your leisurely tour of "Edis-slow."

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 15.8 miles / 25.3 km

Total Travel Time: 33 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 7 hours