

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to RV Travel in **South Carolina**

Speed limits, towing rules, NPS reservations, hurricane windows,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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RV travel in South Carolina

South Carolina compresses a lot into a small state. The Atlantic coast runs from Myrtle Beach down through Charleston, Beaufort, and Hilton Head; the Lowcountry rice plantations and Gullah-Geechee corridor sit just inland; the Midlands hold Columbia and the Congaree NP (one of the largest old-growth bottomland hardwood forests in the Eastern US); and the Upcountry climbs into the Blue Ridge foothills around Greenville and the Cherokee-Sumter National Forest border. The state-park system is small but well-run with full-hookup sites at most coastal parks. Roads are generally good, fuel is cheap, and the I-95 / I-26 / I-85 grid handles big rigs. The catches are coastal: Jun-Nov hurricane season, with Hugo (1989) still in living memory as a benchmark; summer humidity is punishing inland; the Lowcountry has serious bug season May-Sep; and the Upcountry foothills have a handful of grades and tight back roads where 40-ft rigs need to think twice.

South Carolina by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	232
Established campgrounds	87
Dump stations	17
Propane refills	16
Potable water fill-ups	48
Laundromats	10
RV showers	13
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	33

Source: iOverlander community database (65% of South Carolina spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	70 mph
Interstate (trucks + towing)	70 mph
US/State highway (cars)	55-60 mph (posted)
US/State highway (towing)	55 mph
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
RV passenger seatbelts	Required for all front-seat occupants

Cell phone use while driving	Texting banned statewide; hand-held strongly discouraged; full ban for drivers under 18
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Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-95	Atlantic-corridor spine north-south through Florence and Walterboro. Easy. Hurricane-evac route Jun-Nov.
I-26	Charleston northwest through Columbia to Spartanburg and Asheville (NC). Easy.
I-85	Greenville/Spartanburg northeast to Charlotte (NC) and southwest to Atlanta (GA). Easy.
I-77	Columbia north to Charlotte (NC). Easy.
I-20	Columbia east to Florence and west to Atlanta. Easy.
US-17 (Coastal Highway)	Georgetown south through Charleston and on to Savannah (GA). Mostly four-lane, but the Charleston downtown stretch is narrow -- bypass via I-526.
US-378	Columbia east through Sumter to Myrtle Beach. Four-lane in most stretches.
US-29	Greenville to the NC line. Standard.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
Charleston peninsula streets (King St, Meeting St, Broad St)	Narrow colonial streets, low balconies, no big-rig parking, no commercial vehicle access in many alleys. Use James Island County Park (full hookups) or a North Charleston commercial park and drive a dinghy or Uber in.
Folly Beach access (Folly Rd / SC-171)	Two-lane causeway out to Folly Beach; manageable but tight parking on the island itself. Park at James Island County Park.
Edisto Island and the ACE Basin back roads (US-17A, SC-174)	Two-lane through salt marsh and live oak canopy. Several weight-limited bridges on side roads -- stay on the main routes.
Caesars Head and Sassafras Mountain summit (US-276 / SC-11 spurs)	Sassafras Mountain is the highest point in South Carolina (3,553 ft); the summit road is paved but steep with tight switchbacks. Trailers should park at the lower lot.
Coastal evacuation routes during hurricane warnings	I-26 W from Charleston becomes contraflow during a mandatory coastal evacuation. RVs are permitted but expect 8-12 hours through Columbia.

Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Sassafras Mountain summit road	3553 ft	Highest point in South Carolina. Paved summit access; tight switchbacks at the top. Trailers should park at the lower lot.
Caesars Head (US-276)	3266 ft	State park summit. Sustained 6% grade on the climb. Manageable for any rig with low gears.
Cherry Hill area (SC-107)	2800 ft	Sumter NF access through the Chattooga River area. Two-lane mountain highway. Fine for 30-ft motorhomes.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Congaree NP	Free entry	Longleaf Campground (in-park) takes RVs to 30 ft, reservable via recreation.gov, no hookups, primitive. Bluff Campground is hike-in. Subject to flood closure spring through early summer -- check NPS bulletin.
Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie NHP	Free entry to Fort Moultrie; ferry to Fort Sumter \$25-37	Day-use only. Fort Sumter accessible only by ferry from Patriots Point or Liberty Square. James Island County Park has full-hookup RV sites.
Charles Pinckney NHS (Mt Pleasant)	Free entry	Day-use only. Multiple commercial RV parks in Mt Pleasant.
Reconstruction Era NHP (Beaufort)	Free entry	Day-use only at Beaufort and Penn Center (St Helena Island). Hunting Island State Park 15 miles east has full hookups.
Cowpens NB	Free entry	Day-use only. Kings Mountain State Park 25 miles north has hookups.
Kings Mountain NMP (SC/NC line)	Free entry	Day-use only. Kings Mountain State Park adjacent has full-hookup RV sites.
Ninety Six NHS	Free entry	Day-use only. Lake Greenwood State Park 20 miles south has hookups.
Overmountain Victory NHT	Free (auto tour route)	Self-guided driving trail. No NPS camping.

State parks

South Carolina State Parks operate 47 parks; most have RV camping. Notable with full hookups: Huntington Beach (coastal, near Myrtle Beach), Edisto Beach, Hunting Island (Beaufort), Myrtle Beach SP, Devils Fork (Lake Jocassee), Table Rock (Upcountry), Kings Mountain, Givhans Ferry, Sesquicentennial (Columbia), Cheraw. Reservable up to 13 months ahead via southcarolinaparks.com. Day-use

\$3-8/vehicle. Camping \$25-50/night for full hookups. Huntington Beach and Edisto Beach book up nearly a year out for summer.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: No BLM land of significance in South Carolina. Public-land dispersed camping is restricted to the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests and a handful of state WMAs requiring a state hunting/fishing license.

National Forest: Francis Marion NF (coastal lowlands north of Charleston, ~260,000 acres) and Sumter NF (Upcountry, split into three districts: Andrew Pickens, Long Cane, Enoree, ~370,000 acres total) permit free dispersed camping along forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. Developed campgrounds at Buck Hall (Francis Marion, full hookups for RVs to 40 ft, reservable), Honey Hill, Cherry Hill (Andrew Pickens), Lick Fork Lake (Long Cane). Francis Marion was severely damaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and the forest structure is still recovering -- many older campsites no longer exist.

Stay limit: 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

Tribal lands

South Carolina has one federally-recognized tribal nation: the Catawba Indian Nation, near Rock Hill. The Catawba Cultural Center is open to visitors. Several state-recognized tribes (Pee Dee Indian Tribe, Edisto Natchez-Kusso, Beaver Creek Indian Tribe, others) hold smaller cultural sites. Tribal lands are sovereign -- respect signage.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful in Charleston, Columbia, Greenville/Spartanburg, Myrtle Beach, and along all interstates. Tractor Supply, U-Haul, and most KOA / Good Sam parks fill on-site. Sparse in the deep ACE Basin and Lowcountry rural areas -- fill at Walterboro, Beaufort, or Charleston before heading deep into the marshes.

Dump stations: Most SC State Parks have free dumps for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot on I-95, I-26, and I-85 have fee dumps. Charleston and Myrtle Beach commercial parks are dense. Sparse in the Upcountry above 1,500 ft.

Fuel: Diesel and gas widely available along all interstates. Rural stretches in the Pee Dee region (US-378 west of Sumter) and in the ACE Basin can run 25-30 miles between stations. Top up at Columbia, Florence, or Charleston before heading rural. Fuel prices typically among the lowest in the country; Spartanburg and Columbia reliably cheapest.

Weather windows

Best months: April through May and mid-September through October. Daytime highs 70-82 F, low humidity, fewer mosquitoes. Spring brings azaleas and dogwoods.

Avoid: July and August: 90-96 F with 85%+ humidity. June through November is hurricane season on the coast; Charleston has been hit hard (Hugo 1989, Hugo-class storms are a real planning constraint). Late summer brings biting flies and no-see-ums in the marshes. March through May has occasional severe weather with tornadoes possible; less intense than Dixie Alley to the west but real.

Climate caution

The South Carolina coast from Hilton Head to Myrtle Beach is hurricane-vulnerable. Charleston Harbour bridges and I-526 carry the bulk of evacuation traffic; once mandatory evacuation triggers, expect I-26 W to go contraflow within 12 hours. Leave 72 hours before forecast landfall, not 48.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial *HP (*47) from a cell phone, or 803-896-7920 for SC Highway Patrol main line
Road conditions	https://511sc.org

How RV TripGen helps

Charleston park-and-Uber planning

RV Tripgen plans your Charleston historic-district visit from James Island County Park or a North Charleston commercial base and times the Uber legs into King Street and back -- the peninsula itself is not safe for big-rig parking.

Lowcountry hurricane-evacuation awareness

RV Tripgen tracks active named storms in the Atlantic basin and reroutes coastal SC overnight stops (Charleston, Beaufort, Hilton Head, Myrtle Beach) inland 72 hours ahead of any forecast cone-of-uncertainty hit.