

Walk This Way



The Hostess City
puts her best
foot forward
each spring.
Rebecca Cullers
charts a few
courses to help
you locate Savannah's
garden treasures.

Photography by
Kevin Banker

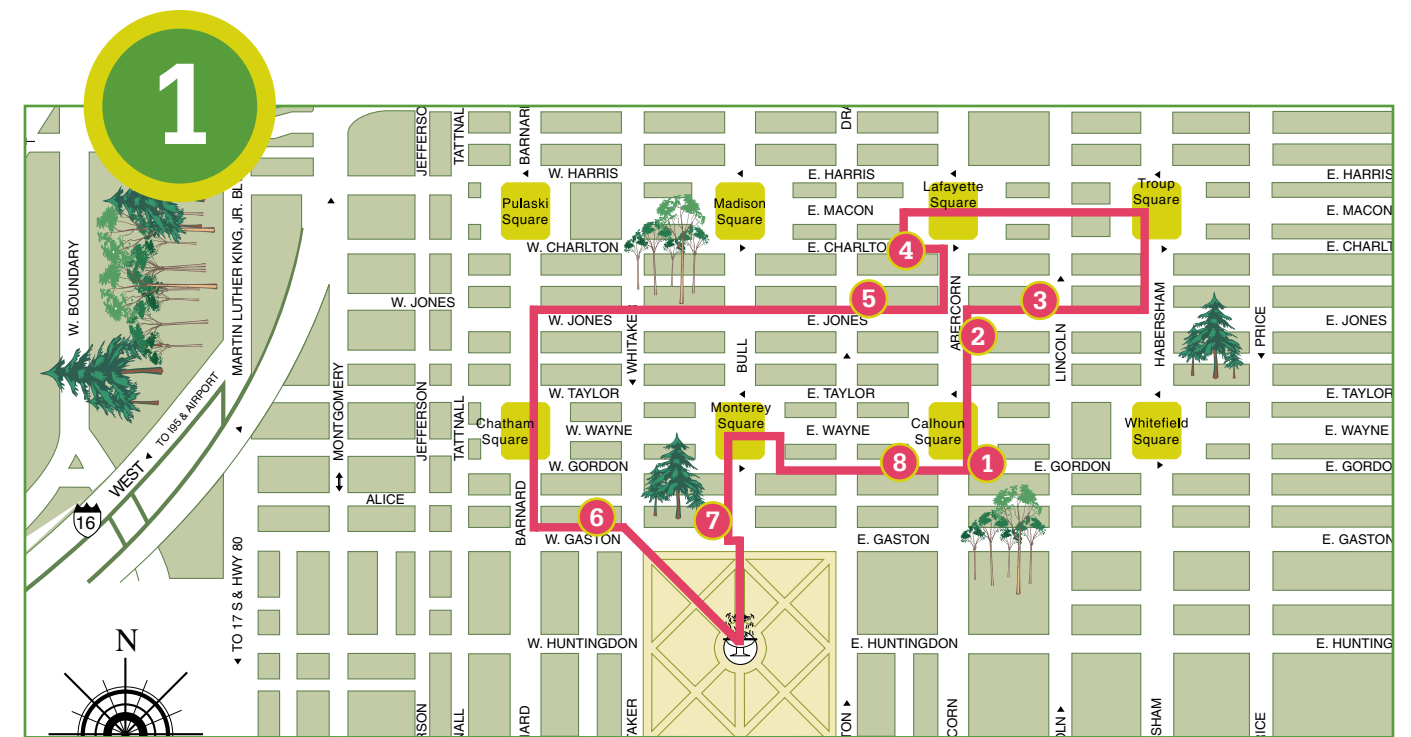


THE MOMENT THE AZALEAS POP, Savannah starts her spring celebration. Like a proper Southern hostess, she welcomes visitors by placing lush bouquets along her squares, parks and avenues. From the billowing veils of wisteria to the riotous explosion of crepe myrtles, dazzling colors pervade almost every corner.

By combining nature's spectacular bounty with striking architecture, Savannah is a walker's paradise. And what better way to enjoy our fair city than on a walking tour? Better yet, how about three? Now's a perfect time to enjoy the fabulous scenery — along with some tasty treats along the way. Let's start the journey.



Armstrong House



Secret Wonders

The glimpse of a hidden garden makes it more intriguing. This walk takes you past a plethora of gardens whose wrought iron gates allow you to steal glances into their other-worldly tableaux. Plus, you'll experience the walkways of Forsyth Park that explode with vibrant colors.



Cowart Coleman Group Architects

1 Massie School Garden: The garden was replanted in February 2009 following a major renovation of the Massie Heritage Interpretation Center. If you haven't been in a while, it's definitely time for another visit. The dedication of Savannah Garden Club members provides for its simple beauty.

2 Clary's Restaurant: A quick check of the route ahead tells you its time to hydrate. This bastion of "the book" — "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" — has epic-sized glasses of sweet tea to quench your thirst.



3 Corner of Lincoln and Jones streets: Nearby, one of the most photographed private gardens in Savannah lies behind a gate capped in jasmine. Can you find it?

4 Andrew Low House: The front courtyard of this historic home is a formal affair of shaped boxwoods with seasonal annuals, and its back courtyard is elegantly lined with azaleas and camellias.

5 Tree Lawns: Here, some of the widest tree lawns in Savannah sport well-maintained boxwood plantings

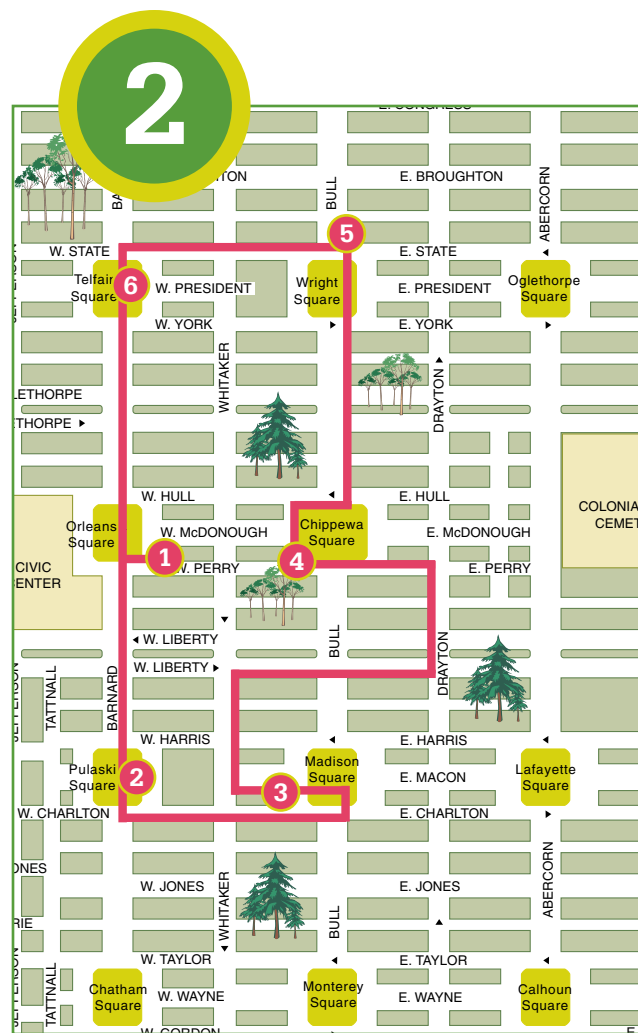
that contrast with the organic shapes of the twisted live oaks along the street. Tree lawns nearby teem with Asiatic jasmine and squirrels.

6 Salon Aqua: Outside, a rose garden blooms in the tree lawn as the sound of Salon Aqua's fountain soothes you. Nearby, try to find the neon planters that break the structured monotony of Roman urns that dominate most gardens in the Historic District.

7 Armstrong House (now home to a law firm): What's better than a stately formal garden? Complementary Ital-

ian Renaissance architecture to go with it. The mondo grass that borders the two lawns also can be found in many squares because of its low maintenance requirements.

8 Cowart Coleman Group Architects: The vibrantly green garden outside this firm is enclosed by an intricate wrought iron gate sculpted to resemble sycamore leaves. It was designed by Savannah ironwork sculptor John Boyd Smith at the behest of the firm. Can you locate the sycamore it's modeled after in the garden?



Savannah Sampler

This trek has a little bit of everything, including a visit to the birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts. The organization will celebrate its 100th anniversary in May of 2012.

1 Harper Fowlkes House: The house has a limited viewing schedule on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you miss those times, a stove plate set in the gate around the left side offers a peek into this lovely little garden in which pointed podocarpus hedges protrude from a wall subsumed by fig vine. Formal box-wood squares surround the garden's raised fountain, which can be heard (but not seen) from the gate.

2 Pulaski Square: With its concentrated center of flowering shrubs and ground cover of Asiatic jasmine, Pulaski Square does everything it can to draw your eye to its center, but don't ignore the lovely homes that surround it. Try to locate one featuring an extremely dense covering of fig vine.

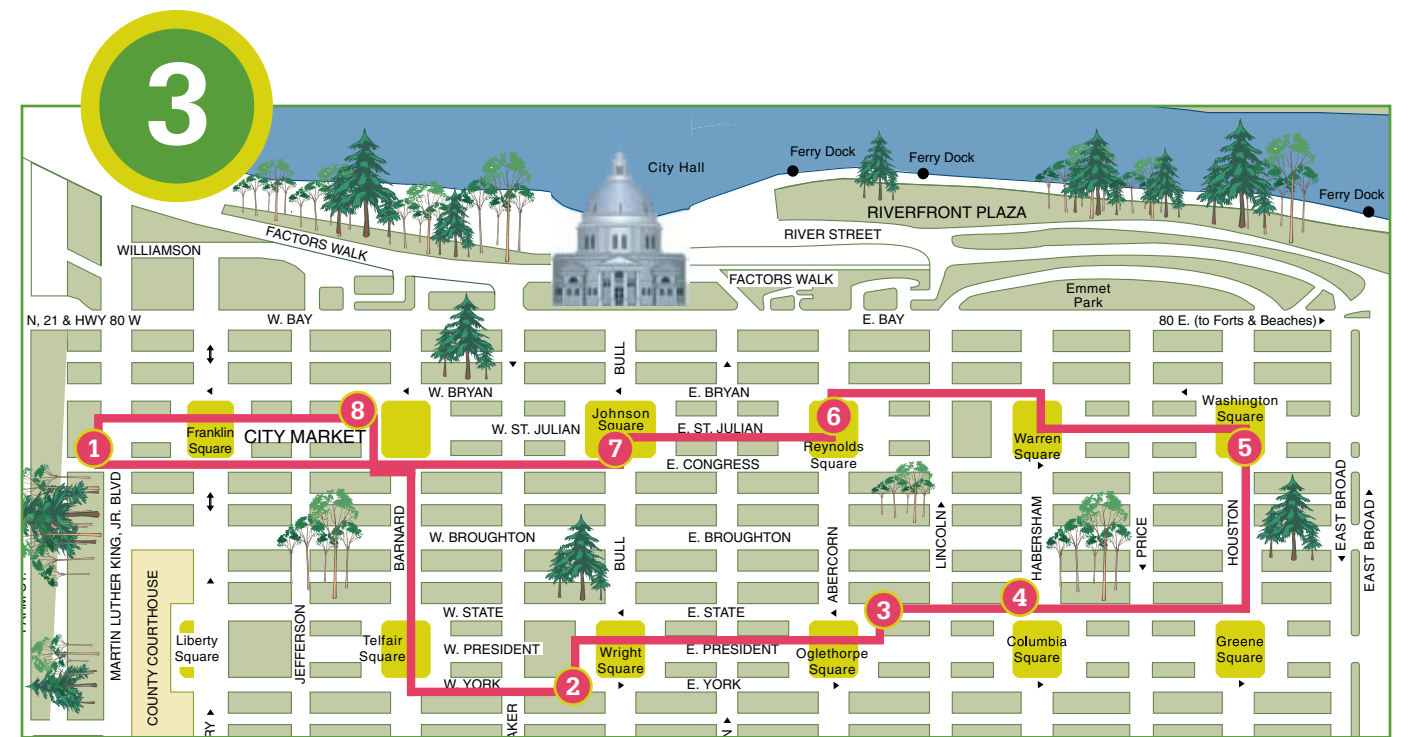
3 St. John's Episcopal Church: The front garden of well-groomed box-woods complements the architecture of the parish house with its Gothic iron-work and unusual oriel windows. Walk to the back to see a charming, gated house garden with a papyrus plant filling out the fountain.

4 Chippewa Square: Several gated gardens surround this beautiful square. This might have been part of the reason the location was chosen for the filming of scenes for the movie, "Forrest Gump." Of course, the famous bench was there just for the movie, so you're out of luck if you're looking for a photo op, but the elegant carp downspouts make up for it ... sort of.

5 Cupcake Emporium: Try as you might, you won't be able to pass by without stopping at

this delightful shop. Think of all the calories you've burned so far. You need to re-fuel!

6 Telfair Square: Take a moment to admire the lovely sculptures that rise above the garden of short shrubs outside the Telfair Academy. If you notice a dreamy scent in the square itself, you've passed by sweet osmanthus, an easily overlooked plant with tiny flowers found in many of Savannah's squares.



Squares and Museums

You love the squares. Everyone does. This tour allows you to stroll through them instead of driving around them. You'll also visit the gardens of the Davenport House Museum and the Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum, whose garden is the largest in the National Historic Landmark District.

1 Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum: Chock-full of native live oaks, pink Indian hawthorn and numerous incarnations of holly, this garden is breathtaking in its diversity. For a map of all the species on display, inquiring minds can visit www.shipsofthesea.org and click on the Garden button.

2 Wright Square Café: Mmmm ... gourmet chocolate. We know it's early in the trip, but you'll need some sugar for energy.



3 Owens-Thomas House: The English-inspired parterre garden features some lovely topiaries, a small fountain and scented flowering vines along every wall.

4 Isaiah Davenport House: This knot garden is a popular place for couples to tie the knot. It was originally a Bicentennial project of the Trustees' Garden Club, but was re-worked in 1999 by Penelope Hobhouse, a renowned garden designer. Knot gardens traditionally feature aromatic herbs and plants, and meandering walkways to allow people to enjoy the

various sights and smells.

5 Washington Square: Borders of mondo grass line the beautiful cracked stone paths of this gem, named for our country's first president after his first visit to Savannah in 1791. Can you spot the Confederate jasmine vigorously attempting to devour a nearby house?

6 Reynolds Square: Solitary camellias are sprinkled about the lawns and, when in bloom, many of them are as pink as the historic Olde Pink House nearby.

7 Johnson Square: Near the sundial, you'll see a

small mosaic map of Savannah as it appeared in 1734. Admire the obelisk, which was laid by Revolutionary War hero the Marquis de Lafayette in 1825.



8 Café GelatOhhh: You've covered a lot of ground. It's time for a break. Enjoy authentic gelato made from scratch — the perfect refreshment for an active spring day in Savannah. ■



Harper Fowlkes House