

SOUTHERN LIVING ANNOUNCES 2025 SOUTH'S BEST AWARD WINNERS

Charleston, St. Simons Island, The Peabody Memphis Among Top Winners

Tampa And Annapolis Rank In The Top 20 South's Best Cities For The First Time

NEW YORK and BIRMINGHAM, Ala., March 11, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Southern Living announces the winners of its ninth annual South's Best Awards. The annual survey highlights top Southern destinations, accommodations, and experiences, voted on by Southern Living readers. Full coverage of the South's Best Award winners will appear in the April issue of Southern Living, on sale March 21 and are online now at [SouthernLiving.com](https://www.southernliving.com).

This year's survey reveals the South's Best Cities, Top Beach Towns, Top Classic Hotels, Top Resorts, Top Beach Bars, Top Barbecue Joint in Each State, Top Seafood Dives, and for the first time, Top Cruises. **St. Simon's Island, Georgia** takes the top spot in the Best Beach Towns category, while **Charleston, South Carolina** remains the South's Best City for the ninth consecutive year, recognized for its rich culture, food, and history.

In addition to the survey results, Southern Living editors have handpicked special features for this year's awards, including: Vacation of the Year (**Outer Banks, NC**), Restaurant of the Year (**Lost Isle in Johns Island, SC**), and a list of Top New Hotels in the South.

"Southern hospitality is more than just a saying—it's a way of life, and no one knows the best experiences better than the locals. That's why, year after year, we turn to our readers to share their favorite places that define the South," said Sid Evans, Southern Living Editor in Chief, "This year, we decided to focus on vacations, which led to the new editor-chosen categories: Restaurant of the Year, Vacation of the Year, and Best New Hotels. We also included the Top 50 Beach Towns because there are so many that our readers love, and now is the perfect time to start planning summer travel."

Highlights from Southern Living's 2025 South's Best Awards survey results are as follows:

South's Best Cities - Top 10

- Charleston, SC
- Savannah, GA
- Asheville, NC
- New Orleans, LA
- Nashville, TN
- Greenville, SC
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Chattanooga, TN
- Atlanta, GA
- Lexington, KY

South's Best Beach Towns - Top 10

- St. Simons Island, GA
- Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, AL
- Hilton Head Island, SC
- Tybee Island, GA
- Jekyll Island, GA
- Sanibel Island, FL
- St. Augustine Beach, FL

- Myrtle Beach, SC
- Fairhope, AL
- Fernandina Beach, FL

Best Barbecue Joints - Winner in Each State

Alabama: Big Bob Gibson (Decatur)
Arkansas: Wright's Barbecue (Multiple locations)
Florida: Big John's Alabama BBQ (Tampa)
Georgia: Southern Soul Barbeque (St. Simons Island)
Kentucky: Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn (Owensboro)
Louisiana: The Joint (New Orleans)
Maryland: Blue Pit BBQ (Baltimore)
Mississippi: The Shed BBQ & Blues Joint (Ocean Springs)
Missouri: Arthur Bryant's Barbeque (Kansas City)
North Carolina: Lexington Barbecue (Lexington)
Oklahoma: Oklahoma Joe's Bar-B-Cue (Multiple locations)
South Carolina: Lewis Barbecue (Charleston & Greenville)
Tennessee: Charlie Vergos Rendezvous (Memphis)
Texas: Franklin Barbecue (Austin)
Virginia: Pierce's Pitt Bar-B-Que (Williamsburg)
West Virginia: Rollin' Smoke BBQ (Charleston)


For the full results and methodology from Southern Living's 2025 South's Best survey, including the lists of winners in every category, visit [SouthernLiving.com](https://www.southernliving.com).

About Southern Living

Southern Living celebrates the essence of life in the South, covering the best in Southern food, homes, gardens and travel. Southern Living connects consumers to the region's rich culture through a robust multi-platform presence, including print, digital and social as well as its Biscuits & Jam and Ask Grumpy podcasts and licensing partnerships. Headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, Southern Living is part of the Dotdash Meredith publishing family.

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