SOUTHERN LIVING ANNOUNCES 2026 SOUTH'S BEST AWARD WINNERS

TOP SOUTHERN CITIES, BEACH GETAWAYS, BARBECUE JOINTS, GOLF DESTINATIONS, AND MORE REVEALED AS SOUTHERN LIVING CELEBRATES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA MARKS A DECADE AT NO. 1 AS SOUTH'S BEST CITY

NEW YORK and BIRMINGHAM, Ala., March 12, 2026 /**PRNewswire**/ -- Today, Southern Living announces the winners of its tenth annual **South's Best Awards**. In its 60th anniversary year, Southern Living once again turned to its trusted readers to name the South's very best destinations, accommodations, and culinary experiences. Full coverage of the South's Best Award winners will appear in the April issue of Southern Living, on sale March 20 and online now.

This year's survey reveals the South's Best Cities, Top Beach Getaways, Top Classic Restaurants, Top New Hotels, Top Inns, Top Legendary Restaurants, Top Barbecue Joints in Each State, and more. For the first time, the awards also recognize Top Golf Destinations, expanding to highlight cities and towns with bucket list-worthy courses.

Golden Isles, Georgia takes the winning spot in the Top Beach Getaway category, while **Charleston, South Carolina** remains the South's Best City, marking a decade at the top of the South's Best rankings thanks to its rich culture, celebrated culinary scene, and historic charm.

"If there's one thing we've learned over the past 60 years, it's that we can trust our readers to know the South better than anyone," said Sid Evans, Editor-in-Chief of Southern Living. "For our 10th annual South's Best Awards, we turned to them once again to highlight the destinations and experiences that make the South so special."

The April issue also debuts a reimagined Southern Living — a fitting way to kick off the magazine's 60th anniversary year. The new look reflects the energy, charm, and sophistication of the modern South while honoring the storytelling and traditions readers have loved for six decades.

Highlights of Southern Living's 2026 South's Best Awards survey results are as follows:

South's Best Cities – Top 10

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

Top Golf Destinations

- Pinehurst, NC
- Hilton Head Island, SC
- Sea Island, GA
- Kiawah Island, SC
- Myrtle Beach, SC

Top New Hotels

- The Flat Iron Hotel – Asheville, NC
- The St. Regis Longboat Key Resort – Longboat Key, FL
- The Gilmore – Nashville, TN
- Embers Hotel – Blowing Rock, NC
- Hotel Richemont – Charleston, SC

South's Best Barbecue Joints – Winner in Each State
Alabama: Dreamland Bar-B-Que (Tuscaloosa)
Arkansas: Wright's Barbeque (Johnson)
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 & Whiskey Bar (Baltimore)
Mississippi: The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint (Ocean Springs)
Missouri: Jack Stack Barbecue (Kansas City)
North Carolina: Lexington Barbecue (Lexington)
Oklahoma: Swadley's Bar-B-Q (Bethany)
South Carolina: Lewis Barbecue (Charleston)
Tennessee: Peg Leg Porker (Nashville)
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 2026 South's Best survey, including the lists of winners in every category, visit **SouthernLiving.com**.

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