We love our festivals. In fact, South Carolinians like to invite guests—such as you—over to celebrate everything from the blooming of the irises to the running of the horses. It’s a great chance to see us as we really are. Authentic places, flavors, sounds and fun make a festival a great part of any vacation and a wonderful way to get a taste of honest-to-goodness South Carolina hospitality. Some festivals defy classification (such as the Sun Fun Festival in Myrtle Beach that signals the start of summer), but here’s a brief listing of some of our favorites.

To get the very latest information—such as dates and times—go to DiscoverSouthCarolina.com.

FOOD FESTIVALS McClellanville’s Lowcountry Shrimp Festival, Pelion’s Peanut Party, World Grits Festival in St. George, Gaston’s Collard Festival and Hampton’s Watermelon Festival celebrate Southern flavors. There’s also the infamous Salley Chitlin’ Strut, and the Boykin Christmas Parade and Road Kill BBQ.

FESTIVALS THAT BLOOM Plantation, house and garden pilgrimages to Beaufort, Charleston and Columbia are spring favorites. Beautiful blooms are the focus of the Festival of Roses in Orangeburg, the Iris festival in Sumter and the SC Festival of Flowers in Greenwood.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE FESTIVALS The Battle of Cowpens commemorates a key clash of the Revolutionary War. Beaufort’s Gullah Festival celebrates with authentic presentations, music and crafts. International Festivals mark the cultures in today’s Columbia and Spartanburg.

ARTS FESTIVALS Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston and Artisphere in Greenville headline culture and arts. The annual Southeastern Wildlife Exposition in Charleston offers artwork by wildlife painters, sculptors and carvers.

SPORTS While not exactly festivals, the Verizon Heritage golf tournament, NASCAR® races at Darlington Raceway, Aiken’s Triple Crown and Camden’s Carolina and Colonial Cup horse races, and the Family Circle Cup tennis tournament on Daniel Island offer top-quality competition.