Hop aboard one of Charleston's horse-drawn carriage tours, and take a trip back to Colonial times while you learn about the history and lore of this charming Southern city.

The perfect culmination of history, fine dining, shopping, art and Southern hospitality. That's Charleston, SC—the abridged version—and it's one heck of a vacation spot.

This city of well-to-do Southerners boasts the kind of lavish goods and services that can satisfy the pickiest of palettes. The good news is that travelers can experience all Charleston has to offer on even the smallest of budgets. There's a multitude of economical activities that are sure to fill your day with fun, all without emptying your wallet.

After your morning walk, plan to spend hours browsing the worn, window-lined storefronts of Old-World charm—perfect for your whole day of shopping, dining, and sightseeing. And you can be sure of the restaurants, too. You'll find a varied offering for every taste, from cheap eats to gourmet delicacies.

Now it's late afternoon, and as the sun sets, it casts pleasant shadows on the hot streets. Cool breezes rustle the leaves of the palmettos. It's the perfect time, the perfect place, for a horse-drawn carriage ride. So sit back, relax and take in the sights. Stunning scenery. Waterfront mansions. The Battery. Rainbow Row. And all you have to pay for is the ride—and maybe a cold libation for the trip.

Regardless of your budget, head down to Charleston, SC, where you can get history for free, food for next to nothing and a whole lot of appreciation for the Old South without putting a strain on your bank account.

By Angela Shoultz