

SANTEE COOPER COUNTRY OFFERS A LOT OF EVERYTHING.

By Marc Rapport

SANTEE COOPER COUNTRY HAS LONG BEEN LEGENDARY FOR ITS FISHING AND HUNTING BUT THERE'S MORE, A LOT MORE, GOING ON IN THIS FIVE-COUNTY REGION OF SOUTH-CENTRAL SOUTH CAROLINA.

Berkeley, Calhoun, Clarendon, Orangeburg and Sumter counties host a wide array of museums and historical sites, antique-filled downtowns, expansive public gardens and secluded hiking trails, thousands of acres of pristine wetlands and forests, plantation homes, lake and river tours, an impressive dam and lock, and 15 area golf courses.

Santee Cooper Country is easily accessible and amenities are ample. For instance, the town of Santee, at the heart of the region, is off Interstate 95 near Lake Marion and has a number of hotels, restaurants, shops and stores.

Santee also is close to Santee State Park, one of the area's three state parks. It offers cabins and camping on the shores of Lake Marion, which with Lake Moultrie covers more than 171,000 acres and has long had a national reputation for its striped and largemouth bass, big bream, slab crappie and monster catfish.

Nearby is the town of Elloree, with its old-timey downtown and the Elloree Heritage Museum and Cultural Center, showcasing rural life of the late 1800s.

Speaking of museums, there's also the I.P. Stanback Museum with an extensive collection of African and

African-American works at historic South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. That city also is home to Edisto Memorial Gardens, with thousands of roses and a 2,700-foot boardwalk along the Edisto River's North Fork.

The Calhoun County Museum in neighboring St. Matthews has exhibits that chronicle county history, and it offers genealogy research. Visitors here can stay at the beautiful Bridge Street Bed & Breakfast.

Sumter, home to Shaw Air Force Base, has Swan Lake Iris Gardens, a remarkable 150-acre setting where swans grace the centerpiece blackwater lake, while in Berkeley County, there's Cypress Gardens, whose 175 acres include a butterfly house, freshwater aquarium, reptile center and big alligators, along with wetlands tours in flat-bottom boats known as bateaus.

Berkeley County also is home to Mepkin Abbey, a serene monastery known for its gardens, fresh eggs and baked goods, and Old Santee Canal Park, site of the first true canal built in America and now home to four miles of boardwalks, trails and the Berkeley County Museum.

This is just a small sampling from this diverse mix of woods, water, town and country.

Find out more...

Santee Cooper Counties Promotion
Commission & Visitor Center

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www.santeecoopercountry.org

