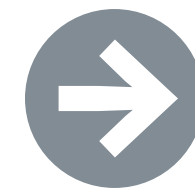




SOUTH'S GUIDE TO:

URBAN ADVENTURES

EZRA SALKIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN GIBSON



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CHASED BY BULLS (LIKE THE SPANIARDS IN PAMPLONA DO EACH JULY) IN ORDER TO HAVE FUN WITHIN THE CONFINES OF A CITY, OR INJECT YOUR WEEK-ENDS WITH A LITTLE MORE EXCITEMENT. SURE, THE FEAR OF DEATH AT THE POINT OF A BULL'S HORN CAN STIR YOUR ADRENALINE, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF INTERESTING (AND QUIRKY) ADVENTURES TO BE HAD IN AND AROUND A QUIET LOW-LYING HAVEN LIKE SAVANNAH THAT ARE ALSO COMMUNAL, ECO-FRIENDLY—AND EVEN GOOD EXERCISE.

The word “adventure” means something different to everyone. This is particularly true in the Lowcountry, with the plethora of personality types it attracts. TAKE A GANDER AT THE ACTIVITIES WE'VE INCLUDED IN OUR GUIDE—SOME ARE MORE BEFITTING OF THE SLOW-PACED SOUTHERN LIFESTYLE, OTHERS ARE MUCH LESS SO. In any case, there's enough variety here to explore the Georgia coast's urban, rural, swamp, ocean, forest, rooftop, pavement and even beer brewing scenes. In other words, you're bound to find something here that's (possibly quite literally) up your alley.

BREW/ DRINK/ RUN

For some people, fitness is an adventure. And in Savannah, you don't necessarily have to go scout it—you can let it map itself.

“Savannah is the perfect running town,” says Lee Heidle, one of the founders of Brew / Drink / Run (BDR), a website dedicated to educating the masses on quality beer and health.

“Because Savannah is a planned city, built on a grid, and because of its symmetry, it's easy to map out a run for

distance and then add variety by simply shifting the run over a block or two,” Heidle says.

It's true; Savannah runners have almost as many different scenic options as a home brewer has when it comes to brews.

“The neighborhoods—like Ardsley Park and the Victorian District and, of course, the Historic District proper—are all prime spots for architecture enthusiasts. You really notice the small details on foot that you can easily overlook in a car. Then you still have your choice of parks: Forsyth, Daffin

and Lake Mayer,” Heidle says. The ghost hunters can even take a jog through our favorite Southern gothic cemetery, Bonaventure.

To join the club, you must be willing to give a try to at least two out of the three things mentioned in its title: (home) brew, drink, or run. The crew—all guys with regular day jobs—has answered the call to worship at the altar of craft beer, only they do it while ambulatory. Each member dares to defy the stereotype of the beer guy. To them, home brewing is a fine alchemy, an art, as Raymond Gaddy, a painting

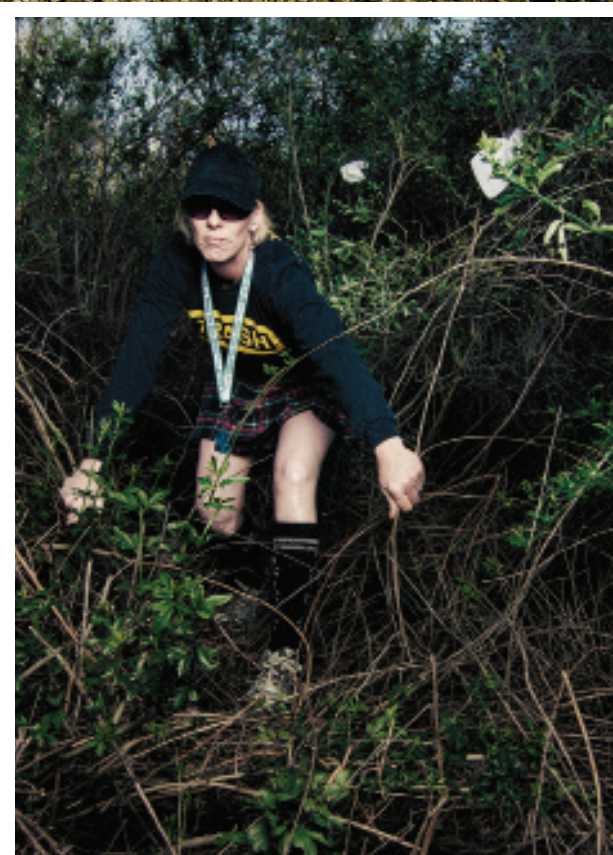
professor in the circle, describes it. But enjoying the fruits of their high-calorie labors comes at a cost: strides to healthier living.

“You don't have to start doing 5K runs,” says Keith Dion, another one of the guys and a former “classic excuse-maker” when it came to exercise.

“You do it one step at a time,” he says, taking a sip from a cold glass and joking about his gateway beer as if he's addressing a self-help group. “When I started running, my first goal was just to make it around Daffin Park once without stopping.”

According to the guys, in the last five years the heightened cognizance of craft beer in Savannah has paralleled a rise in running interest, as proven by the fact that there's a different race to be found almost every weekend. The benefits are clear, even beyond the communal aspects—just ask Heidle: “Good beer makes everything better.” **WHERE TO DO IT—BREW, DRINK OR RUN? IT'S UP TO YOU. CATCH UP WITH THE BREW/ DRINK/ RUN GUYS AT BREWDRINKRUN.COM.**

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE
(Clockwise from top): Brew/ Drink/ Run members warm up for a run; Hash House Harrier, code-named “RV,” marks a trail; S.E.R.E. Race veteran Brandy Mai belly-crawls over dunes to the next challenge.



BEACH BOOTY

For the more active but less urban-inclined weekend warrior, Georgia's coastal islands offer seemingly endless dunes and surf. Kiteboarding, for example, is one of the fastest growing water sports in the country and the trend hasn't skipped the creative coast. Since the early 2000s, kiteboarding has become so popular in the area that a Tybee Island Kiteboarding Association has been established. To learn about, or to purchase all the necessary kiteboarding gear, All Out Kiteboarding, Georgia's first and only dedicated kiteboarding shop and school, is the stop for you. Visit aokwatersports.com for more information.

For the more meandering treasure seeker, or just the beach bums, the mystery of what a metal detector might pick up when combing the Tybee sands can put a little more pep in your weekend step. After all, there's still that unrecovered 1950s hydrogen bomb bumping around Tybee's ocean floor. As for the easier, metal-detectable finds, they may not be as unique as what you'll find geocaching, but they'll probably be worth more at the pawn shop. In a city as rich in history as Savannah don't be surprised to stumble upon an 18th-century coin or a button from a Civil War uniform. Metal detectors are available at most electronic stores, and anywhere there's sand or dirt is a good place to become a finder-keeper.

S.E.R.E. RACE

If your adventure style is a little more structured and a step or two above the norm in intensity, the S.E.R.E. Race, which comes to Atlanta on May 11, might be a good fit for you.

"That is, if you're looking to take your



REACH NEW HEIGHTS: zip through the trees with a guide or on your own.

adventurous side to the next level," says Brandy Mai, S.E.R.E. Savannah veteran and the marketing director for the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. S.E.R.E.—strength, endurance, (self) reliance, evolving (your body and mind)—is an accurate acronym, says Mai, former military herself and mother of four. According to the S.E.R.E. website, **the race focuses on the principles of survival and is loosely modeled after the U.S. military S.E.R.E. school.** The instructors, who are experts in special operations, natural and tactical survival and physical conditioning, look to challenge participants in "interesting" ways in "austere" environments, which include maritime, urban and woodland categories.

Mai graduated from her Savannah Summer 2012 tour with a badge for completing the urban version.

"There's nothing pretty about the way I run. My goal is always strictly just to finish," she says, fidgeting with her son's Lego helicopter on the dinner table. Mai's S.E.R.E. instructor began her class at midnight, making her and the others low-crawl—crawling on

hands and knees—down the long side of Forsyth Park. The grueling tests culminated at the lighthouse on Tybee about 12 hours later. If it'll make you feel better, Mai jokes, "It's not the military. They can't actually kill you."

The race fell on the 12-year anniversary of her leaving the military, which goes to show that you don't have to be a Spartan to participate.

"One thing you learn in the military is it's all mental. It teaches you that you're stronger than you give yourself credit for," Mai reflects.

TO REGISTER FOR THE S.E.R.E. URBAN CHALLENGE IN ATLANTA VISIT SEREPERFORMANCE.COM.

HASHING OUT A HOBBY

This venture falls in the "underground" club category. The Savannah Hash House Harriers dart through the middle of the first two ventures in intensity and discipline before veering off into the trees. And that's in the most mild of circumstances in this tradition, which dates back to 1867 and is agreeably historic—even by Savan-

nah standards. It started with London oarsmen who wanted to keep fit during the winter. The name refers to the English children's game where some boys would play the "hares" and others "hounds" who would chase the "hares." That's more or less how the game is played today in "kennels" (or chapters of the club)—a bunch of hounds chase a hare who leads them down a pre-scouted trail marked with flour, chalk, or any other eco-friendly materials.

"A Hash run speaks maybe to the black sheep out there, the more individualist-minded," or, in other words, those who march (or run) to a different beat, says Savannah's longest running Hasher, "Hash" code-named "RV", who has more than 300 races on her ledger.

Hash running isn't for the overly sensitive; their harrier brand of humor could be considered cheeky and even a bit risqué. Participants have to be ready to be called wusses (also in the most mild of circumstances). But, of course, it's all in good fun, RV assures.

She got pulled in in 2002 when the "hounds" dashed past her into the Six Pence Pub. She followed them in and hasn't looked back since. **It's all about getting "shiggy," she says—"the great equalizer, for people of all ages and conditionings, i.e., briar, brambles, swamp and other potentially painful obstacles that may leave you beat-up and dirty."**

"When you crest that hill, you don't know whether you're going to be fording a river or dashing through a homeless camp," she says. No matter what you find on the other side, there'll always be beer at the end. Actually, there'll be beer beforehand, too—just one or two. That's not to say, while it is part of the tradition, drinking is compulsory. Actually, RV never touches the stuff and she's the Savannah "Grand Master." For her, it's all about the adventure and camaraderie of like-minded, individuals. That and the thrill of the chase. "Your first run is free; after that it's \$5 every Saturday, and you have a different mystery adventure to look forward to," she says.

TO LEARN HOW TO HASH HERE IN SAVANNAH, VISIT SAVH3.COM.

CACHE PRIZE

For those who share the adventure-seeking spirit of Tom Sawyer in the age of smartphones, the modern real-world treasure hunt known as geocaching—where players search out hidden containers or caches that typically hold inexpensive, sometimes sentimental trinkets—is worth a try. When players are successful, and often when they're not, they blog to share their experience to the rest of the global geocaching community. Geocaches are found using cryptic clues, descriptions and coordinates that players find online and plug into a smartphone or GPS. Hunts exist all over the world, but one Savannah-nuanced offering in particular takes you off the grid to the grave of a near-forgotten Union soldier from Iowa, who had the misfortune of dying of typhoid fever right here in the Hostess City. Another has you romping around the Downtown Historic District in search of a cache that is placed in honor of the luminary Savannah writer and Georgia state poet laureate Conrad Aiken. Appropriate for the cache dedicated to him, his epitaph reads *Cosmos Mariner—Destination Unknown*.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SAVANNAH HUNTS, VISIT GEOCACHING.COM.

NOT YOUR TYPICAL TOURS

If a guided approach to exploration appeals to you but you prefer a faster pace, wheel around Savannah in one of its varied vessels. The Hostess City is home to everything from pedicabs to Segways.

If you're more of a rider—or more ac-

curately, a peddler—than a runner, the Savannah Slow Ride might be your speed. It began as a pub-crawl, says Slow Ride founder and operator Samantha Meir. Back then, it was just her giving the tours after her husband, a marine engineer, Frankensteined the parts into the elongated, **eco-friendly, 15-person bicycle, becoming the first manufacturer of the multi-person conveyance in the country.** Since then, Slow Ride has expanded to include other tours (sans alcohol) including Crawling Through History, Holy Savannah (a church tour) and BYOB or Bring Your Own Bags (a boutique and antique shopping tour)—aimed at small businesses. **SAVANNAHSLOWRIDE.COM**

Segways of Savannah provides tours of Savannah's 22 squares as well as the famed Bonaventure Cemetery. Riders are given one-on-one Segway training before taking off with a licensed guide. The pace of travel on these **upright electronic vehicles** offers the point of view of a walking tour with a little more speed. **SEGWAYOFSAVANNAH.COM/TOURS**

Providing **peddle-powered rides** for nearly 20 years, Savannah Pedicab is the original bike taxi. With service from Bay Street to Park Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to East Broad Street, Savannah Pedicab is a great way to see the sights or go quickly from drinks at the bar to your dinner reservation. A personal guided tour starts at \$25. **SAVANNAHPEDICAB.COM**

For a **self-guided tour with a twist**, try the view from a Vespa. Hourly and daily rentals are available at Motorini Savannah, the city's only certified Vespa and Piaggio dealer. Less time hunting for parking means more time to enjoy springtime in Savannah. **VESPASAVANNAH.COM**

TREETOP TRENDS

If you're not quite comfortable jumping out of a plane to sky-dive or clambering up a rock wall (Savannah offers both of these), why not meet half-way between the two? At ZipLine Hilton Head, you're suspended high in the air—on a zip line—between two rock towers. "It's a great eco-tourism attraction, and the only one of its kind within 250 miles," says Pamela Freedman, owner of Broad Creek Marina Adventures, which runs the attraction. This two-hour Tarzan-like ride through the trees—a great family or team-building experience—culminates in a 900-foot zipped plunge between the two 75-foot towers, the equivalent of a seven- or eight-story building, which makes the attraction unique to the area, Freedman says. **Learn more about the bird's-eye view at ziplinehiltonhead.com.**

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