



Famous MarshWalk at Murrells Inlet

## THE QUIETER SIDE OF MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.

ENJOY SOME LOW-KEY ADVENTURES

By Sandra Chambers

**W**hile Myrtle Beach is well-known for its bustling beach atmosphere, entertainment, golf and great food, the southern end of the 60-mile Grand Strand offers quiet beaches, wetlands, parks and quaint fishing villages.

### HUNTINGTON BEACH STATE PARK

With three miles of pristine beach for swimming, fishing or relaxing, this park is also a productive ecosystem and part of the South Carolina Heritage Trust Program. Stop by the Nature Center to pet a stingray or horseshoe crab and learn about the many species that inhabit the park. Then set out to explore one of several nature trails where you may spot alligators, shore birds, loggerhead sea turtles and other marsh



Huntington Beach State Park's Nature Center



Statuary at Brookgreen Gardens

wildlife. The 3-mile, paved Waccamaw Neck Bikeway is another option for exploring the park. Be sure to stop by Atalaya, the Moorish-style home that was the winter retreat of renowned 20th century sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington and her husband. [southcarolinaparks.com/huntingtonbeach/introduction.aspx](http://southcarolinaparks.com/huntingtonbeach/introduction.aspx)

### BROOKGREEN GARDENS

Celebrating its 85th anniversary this year, Brookgreen Gardens is considered by many to be the jewel of the Grand Strand. This 9,000-acre landmark features one of the largest collections of outdoor figurative sculptures in the world (1,400 works by 350 American artists). With its combination of natural beauty, history and animal exhibits, there are plenty of activities for the entire family including a Native Wildlife Zoo, a Butterfly House and the Enchanted Storybook Forest. Learn about the rice plantations of the 1800s and the Gullah culture of the African slaves who worked them during a one-hour pontoon boat ride. Twelve larger-than-life LEGO sculptures made with half-a-million Lego bricks, including a 6-foot hummingbird and giant tortoise, are on display through September. [brookgreen.org](http://brookgreen.org)

### MURRELLS INLET

Located on the Waccamaw River, replete with tall cypress and oak trees draped in Spanish moss, this historic fishing village is famous for its pirates. Blackbeard and Stede Bonnet both cruised its waters. Head to the famous MarshWalk, a one-half mile wooden boardwalk along a natural saltwater estuary where you can enjoy a stroll, a variety of water sports such as kayaking or charter fishing or a walking ghost tour to learn about the Gray Man and Alice Flagg. Murrells Inlet is not only famous for its pirates and ghosts, it has earned the moniker of "The Seafood Capital of South Carolina." Enjoy some of its famous fare at fun restaurants along the MarshWalk! [sciway.net/city/murrellsinlet.html](http://sciway.net/city/murrellsinlet.html) 🍷

Photos courtesy of visitmyrtlebeach.com