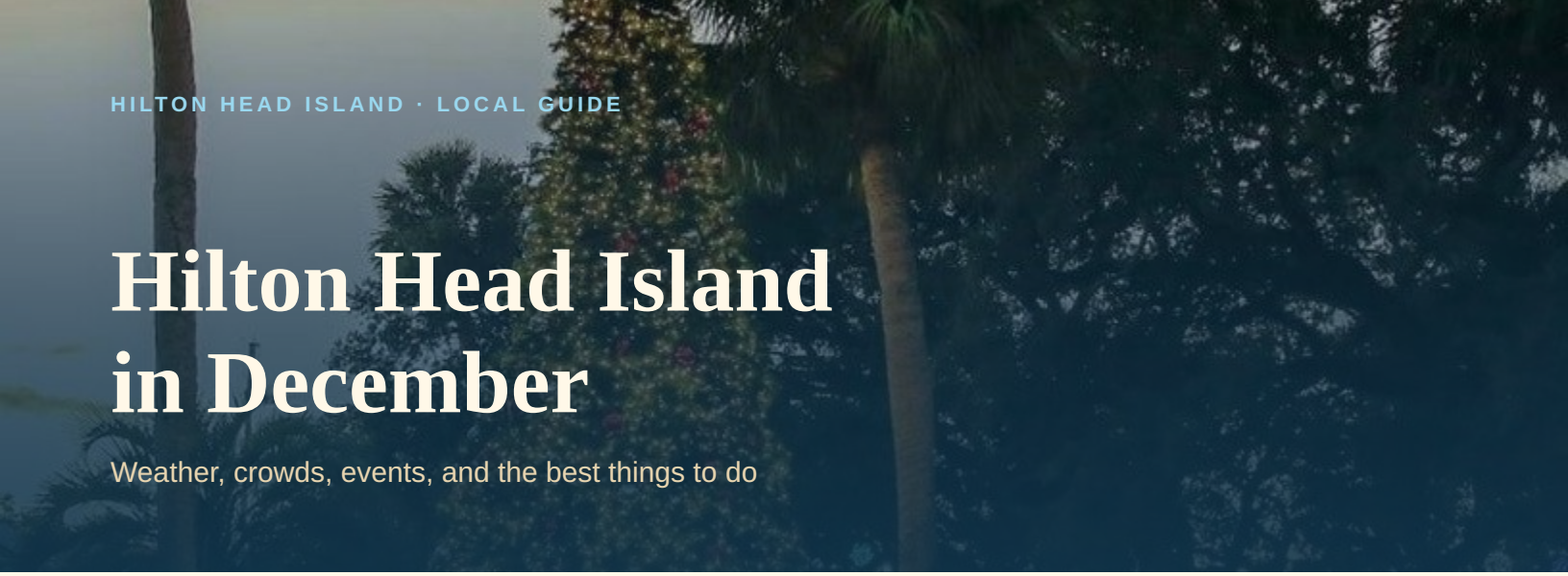


HILTON HEAD ISLAND · LOCAL GUIDE

Hilton Head Island in December

Weather, crowds, events, and the best things to do

Thinking about heading to Hilton Head Island in December? Great choice! This is the cozy, peaceful season when the island slows down, the holiday lights sparkle, and the weather is cool but comfortable.

> **THE QUICK ANSWER**
>
> December on Hilton Head Island means highs near 62 degrees, crisp evenings around 45, light off-season crowds, and a full calendar of holiday events, from Harbour Town's twinkling lights to the New Year's Eve Golf Ball Drop. It's the island's coziest, most peaceful month.

December here feels festive and calm all at once, like a little Lowcountry winter escape without the snow boots and heavy coats. It's the kind of month where you can stroll quiet beaches, enjoy holiday events that feel charming (not chaotic), and soak in sunset views that turn the sky pink and gold. Whether you're planning a family holiday getaway, a couples trip, or just craving a reset before the new year, December in Hilton Head is the move.

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LAST UPDATED SEPTEMBER 15, 2026 · HOST & HOME, HILTON HEAD ISLAND

62°
AVERAGE HIGH

45°
OVERNIGHT LOWS

Light
CROWD LEVELS

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Weather in December



62°
AVERAGE HIGH

59°
OCEAN TEMPERATURE

45°
OVERNIGHT LOWS

December is one of Hilton Head's coolest months, but it's still mild compared to the rest of the country, think light jackets by day, sweaters by night. Daytime highs average around 62°F, great for bike rides, nature walks, and exploring, while evening lows dip to about 45°F, chilly enough for a firepit or warm drink on the patio.

Ocean temperatures hover near 59°F, too cold for most swimmers but stunning for sunrise views. Humidity is low, making the air crisp and refreshing, and rain is moderate with occasional light showers. Sunrises are extra dramatic this time of year, cool air, clear skies, glowing colors.

TIMING YOUR TRIP

Crowd Levels



December is one of Hilton Head's calmest months, no summer chaos, no fall festival rush, just a relaxed island pace. Expect light crowds everywhere, including beaches and bike paths, easy restaurant reservations even for sunset dining, and great pricing and availability on vacation rentals. If you want Hilton Head at its most peaceful, this is your season.

SEVEN IDEAS FOR THE MONTH

Top Things To Do

From holiday spirit to outdoor adventures, here's what shines this month.



01

Walk the Beaches

Even though it's cooler, December beaches are stunning. Quiet, wide open, and perfect for sunrise shell hunting or long walks with a jacket.



02

Visit Harbour Town for Holiday Lights

The Harbour Town Lighthouse and marina area glow with festive lights, great for photos, strolling, or grabbing hot chocolate.



03

Explore by Bike

Mild weather means perfect biking conditions, no heat, no humidity, fewer people.



04

Go Dolphin Watching

Dolphins stay year round, and winter tours are peaceful and uncrowded.

From Tee Times to Firepits



05

Enjoy Golf or Pickleball

Cool temperatures mean ideal conditions for 18 holes, or a few matches on the courts.



06

Visit the Coastal Discovery Museum

Holiday themed events, butterfly gardens, live oaks, and hands on exhibits.



07

Warm Up by the Firepit

Many restaurants and vacation rentals have cozy outdoor fire features, perfect for a glass of wine after sunset.

WORTH PLANNING AROUND

Events and Festivals

The island leans into the holiday season with festive, family friendly events.



Harbour Town Holiday Lights

The iconic Harbour Town Lighthouse and marina are decorated in twinkling lights. Stroll, take photos, or enjoy dinner with a view.



Holiday Wagon Ride & North Pole Experience

SEA PINES RESORT

The Polar Pines Express turns a simple outing into a cheerful journey to the "North Pole," complete with holiday tunes, treats, and story time.



Polar Bear Swim

HARBOUR TOWN POOL

Join fellow "polar bears" for a refreshing dip on a chilly winter day, then warm up with complimentary hot chocolate.



Harbour Town Lighthouse "Golf Ball Drop"

NEW YEAR'S EVE · HARBOUR TOWN

Ring in the new year Harbour Town style with food, music, family fun, and two festive countdowns to welcome the new year in style.

ASK US FIRST

Festival dates shift a little year to year. Our local team keeps track, so ask us what's on the week you're here.

WHERE WE SEND OUR GUESTS

Places to Eat

If you're visiting Hilton Head Island this December and wondering where to eat, here are some of the island's best spots for great food, cozy vibes, and that Lowcountry flavor.



Skull Creek Boathouse

A waterfront gem that's become a must visit spot for locals and tourists alike. This place has it all, fantastic seafood, breathtaking views, and a lively atmosphere that'll make you want to stay all day.



Poseidon Coastal Cuisine

One of Hilton Head's standout waterfront dining and entertainment destinations. It's much more than just a restaurant, it blends fresh, vibrant cuisine with stunning water views, lively bars, and a fun social atmosphere.



The Salty Dog Café

Arguably one of the most iconic spots in Hilton Head, serving up coastal comfort food in Sea Pines since 1987.



San Miguel's

Vibrant, social, and quintessentially coastal, combining laid back Mexican cantina vibes with the charm of waterfront Hilton Head. The outdoor patio and bar are breezy and lively, especially when live music is on.

BOOK DIRECT · NO PLATFORM FEES

Places to Stay

This month is one of the best kept secrets for deals on vacation rentals.



LOCAL TEAM · A BETTER WAY TO STAY

WHERE TO LOOK

Sea Pines

Holiday magic, bike trails, and Harbour Town lights.

Palmetto Dunes

Family friendly, central, and great winter golf.

Forest Beach

Walkable to shops, dining, and beach paths.

PLAN AHEAD

Booking Tips

3–4 Wks

AHEAD FOR BEST PRICING

Last minute bookings are easier to find in December, but booking 3 to 4 weeks ahead still gets you better pricing.

Heated Pools

A COOL WEATHER MUST

Look for homes with heated pools, a huge perk in cool weather.

> A LOCAL TIP
>
> Sea Pines is hard to beat this month for holiday magic, with bike trails and Harbour Town's lights right outside your door.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Before You Book

Is December a good time to visit Hilton Head Island?

Yes. December brings mild, comfortable weather, light crowds, and a cozy holiday calendar, one of the island's most peaceful months to visit.

Is the ocean still warm enough to swim in December?

Not really, water temperatures hover around 59 degrees, too cold for most swimmers, though it makes for stunning sunrise views along the shore.

Is Hilton Head Island crowded in December?

No, it's one of the calmest months of the year: light crowds everywhere, easy restaurant reservations, and great pricing and availability on rentals.

What events happen on Hilton Head Island in December?

Highlights include Harbour Town's Holiday Lights, the Holiday Wagon Ride & North Pole Experience at Sea Pines, the Polar Bear Swim, and the Harbour Town Lighthouse "Golf Ball Drop" on New Year's Eve.

How far in advance should I book a December rental?

Last minute bookings are easier to find than in peak season, but booking 3 to 4 weeks ahead still gets you better pricing.

Find Your Hilton Head Stay This December

Let our local team match you with the property that fits. Book direct, and skip the platform fees.

Find your stay →

