

HILTON HEAD ISLAND · LOCAL GUIDE

Hilton Head Island in October

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

Thinking about heading to Hilton Head Island in October? This is the kind of in-between season we love: the weather is still warm, the summer crowds have cleared out, and everything feels a little more unhurried.

> **THE QUICK ANSWER**
>
> October on Hilton Head Island means highs near 76 degrees, water still warm enough to swim early in the month, light to moderate crowds, better rental deals than peak summer, and a full calendar of fall festivals. It's one of the best shoulder season months to visit.

It's the kind of month where you can settle onto a quiet beach, enjoy outdoor festivals without the crowds, and catch a golden hour sunset over the marsh that feels made for the season. Whether you're coming with family, planning a couples trip, or just need a few days away, this is what vacation looks like with us in October.

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LAST UPDATED SEPTEMBER 7, 2026 · HOST & HOME, HILTON HEAD ISLAND

76°
AVERAGE HIGH

Light
CROWD LEVELS

5
FALL FESTIVALS

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Weather in October



76°
AVERAGE HIGH

74°
OCEAN TEMPERATURE

59°
OVERNIGHT LOWS

October might be Hilton Head Island's best kept secret when it comes to weather. Warm enough to enjoy the beach and water, but cool enough to explore without the summer heat. Daytime highs average around 76°F, perfect for biking and beach walks, while evenings cool to around 59°F, so bring a light sweater.

Ocean temperatures stay warm, around 74°F in early October, so it's still swim worthy. Humidity is lower than summer, rain is minimal, and sunset light is golden and dreamy over the marshes, so don't forget the camera.

TIMING YOUR TRIP

Crowd Levels



October is a local favorite, and for good reason. The summer crowds have cleared out, but the island is still very much alive, with some of the best weather of the year. Expect light to moderate crowds on the beaches and bike trails, easier restaurant reservations, and more availability on vacation rentals. The whole island slows its pace this time of year, and that's exactly the point.

EIGHT IDEAS FOR THE MONTH

Top Things To Do

Here's what we recommend to anyone visiting Hilton Head Island this October.



01

Hit the Beach

Still warm enough to swim and sunbathe, especially early in the month. Coligny Beach and Driessen Beach are laid back and beautiful in the fall.



02

Go Dolphin Watching

October is a great time to spot bottlenose dolphins. Book a tour with Island Explorer or Commander Zodiac, both intimate and family friendly.



03

Explore by Bike

The breeze is cooler, the light is golden, and with more than 60 miles of trails, Hilton Head Island is made for two wheels.



04

Take a Kayak or SUP Tour

Wind through the Lowcountry marshes and keep an eye out for birds, turtles, and a few curious dolphins.

From Tee Times to Sunset Skies



05

Play a Round (or Two) of Golf

With 20+ championship golf courses on the island, October's mild mornings make for some of the best tee times of the year. Harbour Town Golf Links and Palmetto Dunes are local favorites.



06

Visit the Coastal Discovery Museum

Interactive exhibits, scenic walking trails, and family friendly programs make this a solid stop any day of the trip.



07

Day Trip to Daufuskie Island

Hop a ferry to this car free, history rich island full of local artists, oyster shuckers, and coastal scenery.



08

Catch the Sunset at Skull Creek

It's a local tradition. Grab a drink, find a seat, and take in the view.

WORTH PLANNING AROUND

Events and Festivals

Fall fun is in full swing this October, here are a few events worth planning around.



Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival: Fall Tasting Series

A smaller offshoot of the main festival, this October series offers oyster roasts, wine tastings, and chef demonstrations.



Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival

MID-OCTOBER · JUST ACROSS THE BRIDGE

This weeklong festival celebrates everything local: art, seafood, and Lowcountry charm.



Chili Cook-off & Jeep Island

Chili cooks face off in the Professional, Amateur, and People's Choice categories, with winners donating cash prizes to a local youth charity. The Jeep Island expo brings together Jeeps from around the country.



Hilton Head Island Octoberfest

SHELTER COVE HARBOUR & MARINA

Octoberfest at Shelter Cove, sponsored by Sam Adams and Rollers Wine & Spirits.



Halloween on the Harbour

HARBOUR TOWN, SEA PINES

Activities, games, and trick or treating around Harbour Town, plus a costume fashion show on the Liberty Oak stage.

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

Cooler evenings mean patio dining, fresh caught seafood, and maybe a glass of wine by the firepit. A few spots worth planning a meal around:



Bowdies Chophouse

Upscale steakhouse, great for a romantic night out: dim lighting, craft cocktails, and cuts worth the occasion. Reservations recommended.



Old Oyster Factory

A local legend with waterfront views and a seafood menu that delivers every time. Oysters and shrimp and grits are a must, go right before sunset.



Black Marlin Bayside Grill

Casual and lively, with plenty of waterfront energy for families or big groups. Don't skip the Marlin Mocha or the sushi nachos.



French Bakery

Tucked into Shelter Cove, perfect for breakfast or a laid back brunch. Buttery croissants, real deal quiche and lattes, and a patio made for taking your time.



The Sea Shack

No frills, all flavor. A true locals' favorite with generous portions and a fried shrimp platter worth planning a meal around.

BOOK DIRECT · NO PLATFORM FEES

Places to Stay

October is prime time for vacation rentals on Hilton Head Island, with more availability and better shoulder season pricing than the summer months.



This is where a thoughtfully hosted stay makes the difference, more than just a place to sleep for the week. With Host & Home, the details are handled before you ever arrive: local support, a well prepared home, and a Hilton Head experience that starts long before check-in.

LOCAL TEAM · A BETTER WAY TO STAY

WHERE TO LOOK

Sea Pines

Great for golf, nature, and an elevated setting.

Palmetto Dunes

Family friendly, walkable to the beach, with plenty of rental options.

Forest Beach

A livelier stretch, walkable to shops, bars, and Coligny Plaza.

PLAN AHEAD

Booking Tips

1-2 mo.

BOOK AHEAD FOR BEST AVAILABILITY

Book 1 to 2 months out for the best availability and shoulder season pricing.

Mid-Oct

BUSIEST FESTIVAL WEEK

As October fills in with fall festival traffic, popular weeks, especially mid month around the Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival, go first.

> A LOCAL TIP
>
> Look for a home with a heated pool if you love an evening swim, especially later in the month as the evenings cool down.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Before You Book

Is October a good time to visit Hilton Head Island?

Yes. October pairs some of the island's most comfortable weather with thinner crowds and better rental deals than peak summer.

Is the ocean still warm enough to swim in October?

Yes, especially early in the month. Water temperatures stay around 74 degrees, still swim worthy.

Is Hilton Head Island crowded in October?

It's one of the quieter months of the year, with light to moderate crowds, easier restaurant reservations, and more rental availability.

What events happen on Hilton Head Island in October?

Highlights include the Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival's Fall Tasting Series, the Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival, the Hilton Head Chili Cook-off & Jeep Island, Octoberfest at Shelter Cove, and Halloween on the Harbour.

How far in advance should I book an October rental?

Book 1 to 2 months ahead for the best availability and shoulder season pricing.

Find Your Hilton Head Stay This October

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

Find your stay →

