



Take a Bite of Kiawah Island

by Dave Lockhart

Take a bite out of a cool historic town, combine it with dynamic golf in atmosphere that is conducive to year-round play, and you have the tasty destination of Charleston, South Carolina. While this part of America is known as Low Country, the region's golf makes it reach new heights.

Annually recognized as one of the best golf resorts in the United States, if not the world, Kiawah Island Golf Resort (kiawahresort.com) is blessed with 90 holes of championship golf designed by five different golf-course architects. The top dog here is the Ocean Course designed by the diabolical one: we are talking about Pete Dye. You are tested on nearly every shot with visual mischievousness to keep you off balance. With constant views of the rollicking Atlantic Ocean, the Ocean Course is a memorable treat to play for any golfer. The back nine is especially beautiful and is a pure test of golf with elevated greens, menacing bunkers, and a meandering waterway. When the wind whips the shore, as it usually does, the Ocean Course is one of the toughest courses



in the world. The post-round experience at Kiawah is best enjoyed in an Adirondack chair with a favorite beverage as you reflect on your scorecard and admire the setting sun over the Atlantic Ocean.

The Ocean Course became an instant classic when it hosted the unforgettable 1991 Ryder Cup won by the U.S. in what was labeled "The War by the Shore." They also hosted the 2012 PGA Championship dominated by Rory McIlroy. And they will host the season's final major championship once again in 2021.

Four other fantastic courses cut through the tranquil wilderness and marshland on Kiawah. Jack Nicklaus' Turtle Point, a course that rewards a strong iron game (think Jack in his heyday), includes three striking ocean front holes. The 18th hole is a strong finisher at 400 yards with water down the left, OB on the right, and an undulating green with a railroad bulkhead fronting the hazard.

The newly renovated Tom Fazio-designed Osprey Point will test your game in every facet on a titillating layout made up of





stately pines and shimmering lakes. At Osprey Point, you will find a pleasant mix of holes throughout the marshland layout, which leads to views of numerous wildlife and the occasional alligator. There are too many good holes to mention here, with strong par 5s, fun par 3s, and a couple of drivable par 4s.

Oak Point Golf Course has also received a recent facelift. With its undulating fairways and challenging greens, this track is built for shotmakers. Strategy and a thinking approach will be rewarded over pure power. Built on the grounds of an old indigo and cotton plantation, Oak Point is a bit of a throwback to the classic courses of the 1920s where the ability to place the ball yields satisfying scorecards.

Gary Player's Cougar Point Golf Course has one of the most dramatic vistas on the island. Along the Kiawah River, it features a wonderful blend of short and long par 4s, risk/reward par 5s, and extremely scenic and challenging par 3s.

Plenty of dining options spice up Kiawah Island, and the Sanctuary Hotel and Spa is my favorite retreat after hitting the links. The island has remained nature's preserve with an abundance of wildlife. Having been voted the "Number One Island in the United States" by Conde Nast in 2014, assures golfers that their own private war on the shore will be among their finest golf experiences.

On the north side of Charleston in a town known as the Isle of Palms, lies Wild Dunes Resort (wilddunes.com) and its two terrific Tom Fazio Championship courses. Many may remember Wild Dunes' Links Course as one of the perennial top 100 layouts back in the 1990s. This seaside delight was Tom Fazio's first solo design. Now thanks to an extensive renovation project it is ready to shine once again. The cart paths, irrigation system, and grass on the greens (Champion Bermuda replaced TifEagle) are all new. Fazio's team found a few extra yards, stretching the par 70 from 6,383 yards to 6,503



yards. On certain holes, deep bunkers were added or old ones removed to frame shots better. The Links Course closes with a brand new scenic par 3 that offers the Atlantic Ocean as a backdrop.

St Wild Dunes Golf resort, there are numerous accommodations for travelers and dining options that will please any palate. Best non-golfing trip—take a boat cruise through the delightful Intercostal Waterway and then try your skill at a little skeet shooting.

Just a few hours down the road from Kiawah sits one of the more intriguing properties I have ever experienced. Cabin Bluff in Woodbine, Georgia, (cabinbluff.com) is a sportsman's dream with multiple hunting options, world-class fishing from the Intercostal Waterway to the Atlantic Ocean, and a Davis Love III designed golf course.

The 18-hole course is a groundbreaking creation as there are six thoughtfully constructed greens, each designed to be played three distinct ways. You play 18 different holes on land where there are just six holes, but you have three flagsticks on each hole. Each time you come to a hole it will have a different yardage with a unique fairway, and a different par. The layout is enjoyable and plays to a healthy 6,400 yards and a par of 72.

This all-inclusive 24,000 acre retreat also serves farm-to-



table options that will satisfy your appetite. Cabin Bluff has been around a long time. It was President Calvin Coolidge's favorite hunting grounds back in the 1930s.

So don't just chew the fat. Take a trip down south and experience a Charleston Chew and a whole lot more.

Check out our video links to see more:

Kiawah Island

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po4tmFrkC-I>

Wild Dunes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6IGWF_M0Qs

Cabin Bluff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB6yTjufD0w>

