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We Love Cottages!

Cozy beach style from New York to California

Tybee Island,
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A NEW PLAN**

NOVEMBER 2014

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SUNNY COLORS THAT POP

SO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN ...

OCEAN SPRINGS

This Mississippi hamlet on the Gulf is a confluence of Southern charm, thriving new businesses, and a stellar art scene

Front Beach and the shimmer of the Gulf Islands on the horizon



IT'S NO COINCIDENCE THAT Ocean Springs calls itself "the city of discovery." What French explorers settled in 1699 remains every bit a revelation today: a quirky gem for art lovers and a culinary destination with more than 100 restaurants, many of which line the streets in the tiny historic district, packed into its 15 square miles.

Colorful and sophisticated, the community is filled with folks who stood by each other after Hurricane Katrina, helping their neighbors rebuild. The result is an Ocean Springs that's even more beautiful than the one nature took away, and more vital than ever.

"When I crossed into downtown Ocean Springs, I told my husband I had found the town we needed to move to," says Roxanne Condrey, who purchased a historic cottage here and opened The Inn at Ocean Springs.

The city of 17,500 supports more than 150 independent shops and art galleries. Housing—from small cottages in the historic district to upscale homes along the waterfront—is on the upswing (but still affordable at an average price of around \$200,000), and with low crime and great schools, the town is a magnet for families.

Ocean Springs draws vacationers with a year-round string of art, music, and food festivals. It's also home to the Anderson family, whose Shearwater Pottery lures collectors to its rustic studios on the water, and whose creative legacy is honored by the gemlike Walter Anderson Art Museum, right in the heart of town.

But perhaps the spirit of Ocean Springs is most obvious at its white-sand beach, where a new playground features a large, whimsical ship that celebrates the town's founding by those maritime explorers. As the day winds down, kids continue to play on the playground while a shrimp boat passes by on its way to local chefs, and two brown pelicans, wild and wheeling, dive for their own dinner.



WHY WE LOVE IT ...

From left: The art of handcrafted pieces is alive and well at the waterfront studios of Shearwater Pottery. Downtown, Washington Avenue is lined with cute cafés and shops.

1 THE ART From galleries like Hillyer House, which features more than 50 local artists, to the funky Art House cooperative housed in a ramshackle red cottage, Ocean Springs puts art at the center of its economy.

2 THE MUSIC Yes, Elvis hung out here, and the live music continues to rock and roll, with Government Street as its epicenter. There's live music nearly every night, with top spots including Mosaic Tapas Restaurant, the courtyard at Leo's Wood Fired Pizza, and Government Street Grocery.

3 THE GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE America's largest national seashore practically surrounds Ocean Springs. On the mainland, the Davis Bayou Area is great for birding and spotting armadillos. Offshore, a seasonal ferry runs from nearby Gulfport to West Ship Island, which offers quiet, bone-white beaches.

4 THE FOOD AND CULTURE Ocean Springs's culinary scene is a boon for visitors and locals. The town also houses a cooking school at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center of Arts and Education.

THE ESSENTIALS

BEACHES

A 20-minute stroll from downtown, Front Beach gently arcs from the Biloxi Bridge to the Ocean Springs harbor. With a fishing pier, a playground, and views of the Gulf Islands, this beach is a true community destination.

JUST VISITING? The pastel-hued Front Beach Cottages are like a luxurious mini art colony, with private patios, hammocks, and kitchenettes. Rates start at \$95; 228/215-0969 or frontbeachcottages.com.

MAIN STREET

Lined with live oaks, Washington Avenue hums with busy shops and restaurants. Realizations is devoted to the work of local artist Walter Inglis Anderson and his family, and The Pink Rooster carries some of the best locally made jewelry.

RESTAURANTS

Vestige restaurant leads with innovative local catch, like panko-crusted red snapper, while Aunt Jenny's Catfish Restaurant skillfully serves family-style, all-you-can-eat catfish. The Shed BBQ & Blues Joint is the spot for pulled pork.

ACTIVITIES

You can explore town on two wheels along the Live Oaks Bicycle Route (get maps at the visitors' center), and then get closer to nature on a South Coast Paddling Company trip along the Pascagoula River and through Davis and Old Fort bayous.

READY TO MOVE IN?



Gulf Getaway

3 bedrooms, 3½ baths
4,570 square feet • \$1,595,000
DETAILS: Mediterranean-style decor with bar, library, and master suite with water views; private boat dock, boat lift, and pool
NEIGHBORHOOD: Seapointe
MLS #266534; owenandco.com



Bay & Bayou

4 bedrooms, 5½ baths
4,538 square feet • \$995,000
DETAILS: Waterfront on Fort Bayou with boat slip and Gulf access; outdoor kitchen and covered pool
NEIGHBORHOOD: Iberville Landing
MLS #269964; coldwellbanker.com



Perfect Perch

4 bedrooms, 2½ baths
2,611 square feet • \$599,000
DETAILS: Two-story home with plenty of natural light, spacious kitchen, and heated saltwater pool
NEIGHBORHOOD: East Beach
MLS #279602; trulia.com