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choose your own **ADVENTURE**

CHARLESTON

SAILING



The boat's heavy keel will keep it from flipping over even with a novice as a captain, but the adrenaline will really start to pump when you're splashing through the waves on a beam reach. If you're lucky, you'll even race alongside a pod of playful porpoises. That's how exciting it will be during Ocean Sailing Academy's (osasailing.com) six-day hands-on course, which will teach you the rudimentary skills you'll need to set your sails for the horizon. You'll join no more than three other students on a tiller-steered, 26-foot Colgate to learn about the complexities of sailing in conditions governed by shifting tides, winds, and currents. Because Charleston Harbor is a commercial harbor, you'll also have real practice with using navigational aids and dodging those pesky container ships. Don't expect to be pampered—Ocean Sailing Academy believes the best way to learn is by doing. You'll need to study up beforehand with a provided textbook and be ready to put your new vocabulary and knowledge into practice from the get-go.



MUST HAVE GEAR

Unless you've got hands like Captain Ahab, you'll want sailing gloves to handle the lines.

Marinetech 3/4 finger sailing gloves, \$19.99, West Marine, 704-588-1020, westmarine.com

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ADVENTURE RATING

If you're not sure you're ready to take the tiller in a six-day course (\$1,250 per person), try the half-day Introduction to Sailing class (\$95 per person), where you'll have the chance to get on the water with an OSA instructor to try out your sea legs.

WHERE TO STAY

At the **Harbour View Inn** (harbourviewcharleston.com; rooms from \$169 per night) you'll have an unparalleled view of Charleston Harbor, where you spend your days on the water. The inn's location is its best feature: it faces Waterfront Park, named by the American Planning Association as one of the top ten public spaces in the United States. From there, stroll past antebellum homes down to the Battery. It's just a two-minute walk to Charleston's Old City Market and steps away from several award-winning restaurants including

Carolinas, Social Wine Bar, and McCrady's. Rooms have private balconies, working fireplaces, and whirlpool tubs. Enjoy a hearty complimentary breakfast on the rooftop terrace before crossing the harbor for your class.

NEED MORE ADVENTURE?

Kayaking: Troll the saltwater marshes of the Intracoastal Waterway with a guide, refuel with a clambake, and spend the night in a tent in the Francis Marion National Forest. Two-day tours start at \$300 per person, natureadventuresoutfitters.com.
Go fish: Charter a boat and join an experienced local fisherman for a day of crabbing or fishing in fresh- or saltwater. Two-hour charters begin at \$100 for four people, reelfishfinder.com.
—Carrie Campbell