



Ft. Sumter National Monument

Walking in the Steps of Those Who Shaped Our Nation

The first shots of the American Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter at approximately 4:30 a.m. on April 12th, 1861. Fort Sumter evacuated 34 hours later, and Union forces tried for nearly four years to take it back. Walk in the steps of those who shaped this nation alongside a national park ranger, and take in the stunning scene of historic Charleston as you cruise the harbor en route to the fort.

Explore the Grounds of Fort Sumter

Stand on the grounds where America's deadliest war began at Fort Sumter National Monument. The first shots were fired upon Fort Sumter, igniting a conflict that saw more than 700,000 casualties. Experience the opening battle of the American Civil War and explore its origins with a national park ranger. Your approximate one-hour visit to Fort Sumter allows ample time to explore well-preserved fort ruins and browse museum store souvenirs.

The national park rangers at Fort Sumter will relay stories of courageous heroes in action from the Civil War's first battle. There is the story of Sergeant Peter Hart raising a shell-torn flag during bombardment, among many others. A visit to Fort Sumter National Monument provides a window into the life and trials of America's heroes, from the Civil War to today's modern conflicts.

A Trip Around the Harbor

Board your tour boat and get ready for a scenic ride through the historic harbor. The Fort Sumter National Monument sits prominently at the mouth of Charleston Harbor, a strategic location that was crucial to its defense. Your tour vessel will cruise to Fort Sumter from Liberty Square in downtown Charleston. The Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge provides the backdrop for all Fort Sumter cruises, with Charleston's stately Rainbow Row and Battery homes clearly seen. Those departing from downtown will see Aquarium Wharf as they depart and return. Then, arrive at Fort Sumter for a self-guided tour covering one of the most pivotal times in American history. After exploring this national park, you'll go home changed. You walked the grounds and read the accounts of those who played a role in the Civil War, the most divisive conflict in American history.