SOUTH CAROLINA

THE PALMETTO STATE *Became a state May 23, 1788 (8th)*

South Carolina runs from the Blue Ridge Mountains down to sandy sea islands. It was one of the 13 original colonies, and the Civil War began in Charleston Harbor.



Why the Palmetto State?

On June 28, 1776, nine British warships attacked a half-built fort on Sullivan's Island, near Charleston. Its walls were made of palmetto logs and sand. Palmetto wood is soft and spongy, so the cannonballs sank into it and the walls did not splinter. After nine hours the ships gave up. A palmetto tree now stands on the state flag.



The Giant Peach of Gaffney

Drivers on Interstate 85 near Gaffney pass a giant peach on a pole. It is a 135-foot water tower called the Peachoid, built in 1981. It holds one million gallons. The town needed a water tank and wanted to show off its peach orchards. Artist Peter Freudenberg painted it to look real, with a stem, a leaf and a cleft.



The Gullah Geechee

The Gullah Geechee people of the coast and sea islands have kept many African ways alive. They created Gullah, a language spoken nowhere else in the world. It has African words such as guba for peanut. Gullah cooks make red rice and okra soup. They still weave sweetgrass baskets, a craft their ancestors carried from West Africa.



A Forest of Giants

Congaree National Park protects the largest old-growth bottomland hardwood forest left in the United States. Old-growth means the big trees were never cut down. Bottomland is low ground beside a river. The Congaree and Wateree rivers often flood the forest and leave fresh, rich soil behind. One loblolly pine here stands about 167 feet tall.



Tea Grown in America

Tea is made from the leaves of a bush called Camellia sinensis. A French plant expert brought it to South Carolina in the late 1700s, but farm after farm failed. Wadmalaw Island, near Charleston, turned out to be right for it, with sandy soil, warm weather and about 52 inches of rain a year. Today 127 acres of tea grow there.



The Egg-Shaped Racetrack

Harold Brasington watched the Indianapolis 500 car race in 1933 and wanted a big paved track for his hometown of Darlington. He built it on farmland in 1950. The landowner did not want to lose his fishing pond, so Brasington made the turns at one end tighter than the other. The track came out shaped like an egg.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 5.6 million (23rd most)
Size	About 32,000 square miles (40th largest)
Highest point	Sassafras Mountain, 3,553 feet
Counties	46
Neighbors	North Carolina, Georgia

DID YOU KNOW?

- South Carolina grows more peaches than Georgia, the Peach State. Only California grows more.
- A line on the floor of the tower on Sassafras Mountain marks the border. Visitors can stand in two states at once.
- Carolina comes from Carolus, the Latin form of Charles. The name honors King Charles I of England.
- For about two weeks each spring, thousands of fireflies near Columbia blink on and off together, all at the same time.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is the largest in South Carolina?
2. Which city is closest to Darlington Raceway?
3. Which animal was chosen in 1999 after third graders asked?

Answers: 1. Charleston 2. Florence 3. Spotted Salamander