

WOMEN'S COASTAL SKILLS Sea to Table

BY ANGEL HOLMES

When I got invited to a Women's Boat Trip learning boating and outdoor skills in Charleston's beaches and creeks, I said yes immediately. When I realized it was on a childhood friend's boat with his wife Morgan Ziegler leading the charge, I was even more excited. And honestly? It exceeded every expectation.

Growing up in Charleston with a dad who lives on Hamlin Creek on Isle of Palms, I spent plenty of time on boats and in the water. I'd done some of these activities before. But I'd never had real instruction—just my grandpa and dad teaching me what they could, the way they knew how. This was different.



The women leading this trip—Nike Pappas, Courtney Hutson of Golden Girls Outdoors, Kelcie Hall, Michelle Brooks and Nicole Pettinelli of Charleston Bird Club weren't just knowledgeable. They were the kind of women you immediately want to be friends with. The whole day felt less like a class and more like an adventure with people who genuinely love what they do.

We started at a local oyster bed harvesting oysters, clams and mussels. Then we headed to Capers





Island for a fishing session that covered everything: rod selection, tying knots, making rigs, where to fish, regulations, lures, bait and how to safely de-hook and release a fish. We learned filet techniques, cast netting basics, shrimping and crabbing.

Courtney taught us boat driving, navigation and anchoring. On the beach, we cooked what we'd harvested over an open fire and ate fish stew made from our catch. Then our captains led us on a nature walk to the boneyard beach and through inland trails, pointing out wildlife and edible native plants along the way.

There was mud. There was laughter. There was salt water, sunshine and so many smiles.



The pontoon boat held over a dozen of us, and by the end of the day, we'd bonded over shared experiences and new skills.

The best part wasn't just what I learned—it was the confidence I gained and the respect I now have for the people who live this life every day.

Barrier Island Eco Tours has been doing trips like this for years. They offer sunset dolphin cruises, birding excursions, school trips and more. Book one with friends. You'll walk away more capable, more connected and more in love with Charleston's waterways than you ever thought possible. 🌊