

A FOODIE'S GUIDE TO GOING SOUTH

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SPICE UP YOUR FLIGHT

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town, full of Victorian houses and boardwalks. However, the protected anchorage to the east of the village is tight for *Te Mana*, so we've never felt comfortable going ashore for a leisurely meal. Next time, if the crew approves, I plan to dine at Freda's Cafe, at the corner of Ocean Street and Carpenters Lane, and order the perfectly cooked crab cakes with garlic mashed potatoes, or one of the other seafood dishes Freda's is famous for. And it's BYOB, so even more of a value.

If the weather turned bad 24 hours south of Cape May, then just west of the Chesapeake bridge is Little Creek, Virginia. Although I have never been there, I suspect that I would like brunch and the "laid back" atmosphere at Captain Groovy's raw bar and grill (captaingroovys.com). I can only imagine the heaven of French toast made with whole wheat bread stuffed with mixed berries and cream cheese, dipped in custard and served with sausage links or bacon, finished with strawberry syrup. But the weather held and Charleston was our next port of call.

If food is your dharma, then beware — you may never get any farther south. We often thought that an Excel spreadsheet was in order for this town, as the choices are wide, and varied, with the common factor being that most of the food is better than you'll find anywhere else. Maybe I exaggerate a bit, but who wants to miss out on the next best iteration of shrimp and grits? And

became a strong proponent of progressive dining. Consider the Low Country egg rolls (tasso ham, collard greens and sausage rolled in a wrap and fried) at Magnolias (magnolias-blossom-cypress.com). After a break maybe we'd stride to King Street and sit down

at Jim and Nick's to the best beef brisket and cheesy corn muffins (my southern boat-designer friend who now lives in Maine tells me that the secret is the special soft biscuit flour, indigenous to the South), or head to Blossom for the pan-roasted golden tilefish with sweet potato puree. How about going back to the north end of town for gnocchi that is as soft as pillows of love (food is good) at Fig (ataffig.com).

Saturday, we filled our cooler at the farmer's market in Marion Square. Galley provisioning had never been more fun or more complete. Before indulging in a "super biscuit" with poached eggs, crispy pork cheeks and white gravy, we scurried off in search of the ravioli vendor. We bought our mandatory porcini mushroom variety, to be served with brown sage butter while out at sea, along with the butternut squash and kale. Somehow, it just didn't seem right to buy the lobster ravioli.

We slipped the lines at slack tide and motored out toward the breakwater. With 527 nm to go, to our next port of call — Boot Key, Marathon, Florida — *Te Mana* took us south to the sound of her big Caterpillar diesel and her prop turning through the flat water.

As the degrees of latitude grew with every watch change, the water turned to the glassy, clear, piercing blue of the tropics, and the sun intensified. We slipped by Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and crossed the shipping lanes off Miami in the dark, keeping a watchful eye on the sleeping giants that lay waiting for dawn to make their berth beyond Government Cut.

At last, we saw the Seven Mile Bridge, which served as the landmark for our anchorage off Boot Key. Being height

we anchored in a quiet secluded part of the outer harbor. Although this anchorage would be unsuitable in an emergency, I have never known it to be an unpleasant place to anchor for one or two. We tendered into the inner harbor and made our berth a couple of miles deep inside. The harbor tour to look