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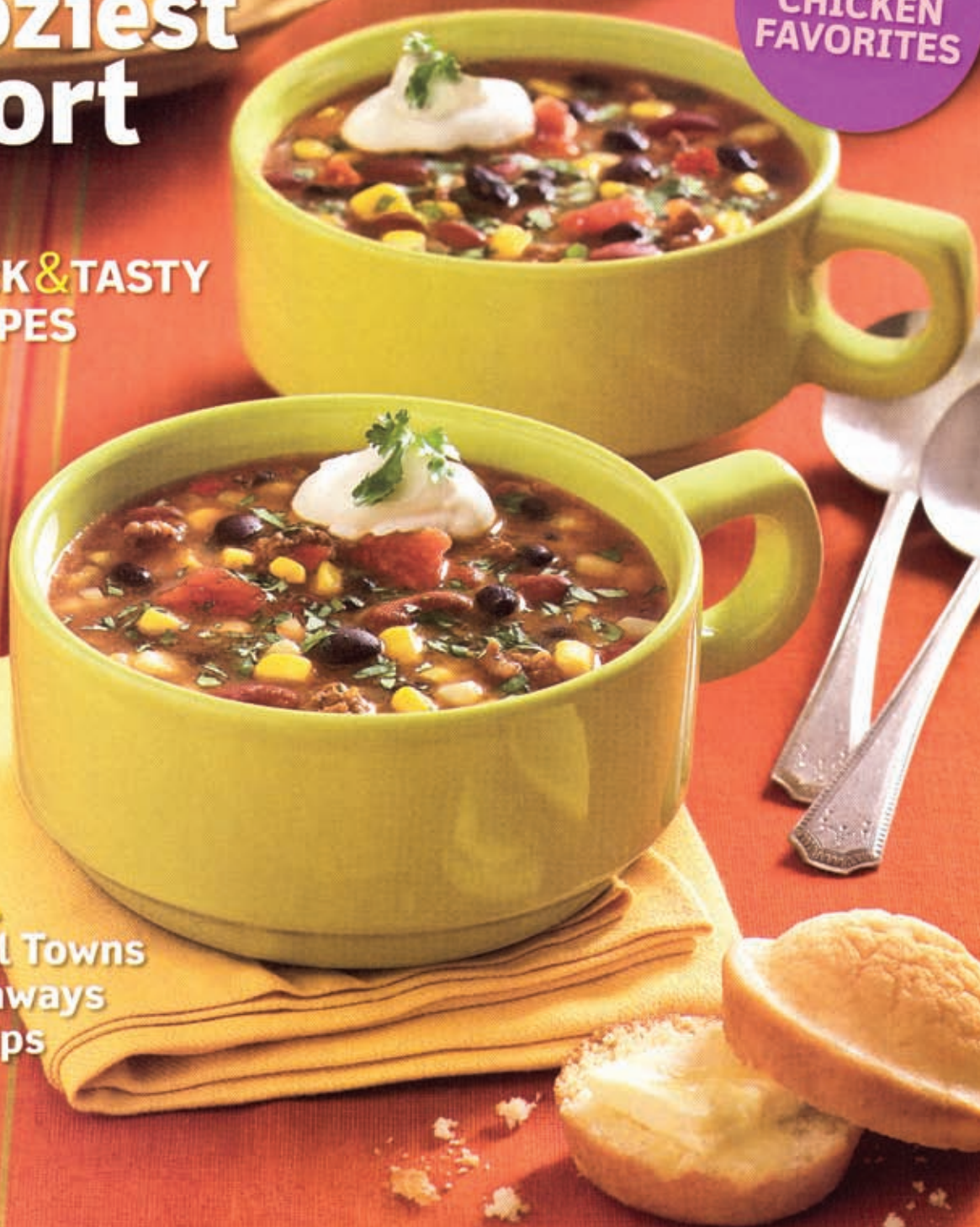
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**OUR  
READERS'  
CHOICE  
AWARDS**

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Vote for your favorites and be eligible for \$10,000 in cash prizes: [southernliving.com/readerschoice](http://southernliving.com/readerschoice)

## Readers' Choice Awards

What's the best beach in the South? The best festival? Our readers from Texas to Delaware weighed in on our annual survey. Read on to see if you agree and to get our take on the votes. By Jennifer V. Cole

**NO. 3 BEST BEACH:  
GULF SHORES/  
ORANGE BEACH,  
ALABAMA**

Readers love this area for its quiet backwaters and powdery white shores.





## A Tale of Two Towns

Small towns are the essence of the South. But a town on the coast has a distinctly different feel than one in the middle of the Hill Country. Here, we've taken a quick look at two much-beloved towns, Beaufort, South Carolina (No. 1 Small Town), and Fredericksburg, Texas (No. 3), to see what makes them unique.

### Best Small Town

- ▲ 1. Beaufort, South Carolina
2. Fairhope, Alabama
- ◀ 3. Fredericksburg, Texas
4. Blowing Rock, North Carolina
5. Franklin, Tennessee
6. Eureka Springs, Arkansas
7. Oxford, Mississippi
8. Grand Rivers, Kentucky
9. Madison, Georgia
10. Hendersonville, North Carolina

#### Fredericksburg, Texas

#### VERSUS

#### Beaufort, South Carolina

10,873

#### POPULATION

11,868

Hill Country, surrounded by rolling hills and a springtime explosion of wildflowers

#### TERRAIN

Lowcountry, surrounded by salt marsh, reedy grasses, pluff mud, and water in nearly every direction

Hike to the top of one of the largest bald granite domes in the U.S. at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area.

#### GET OUTSIDE

Go for a meandering walk or jog around The Point (the land between Carteret Street and the Beaufort River), home to some of Beaufort's largest and most historic homes.

German pretzel at the Fredericksburg Bakery, filled with brown sugar, almonds, and pecans, and topped with icing

#### SWEET TREAT

A tall slice of gooey pecan pie at Magnolia Bakery Cafe

Luckenbach Dance Hall, of Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings fame, is located here.

#### BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY CONNECTION

*The Big Chill* was filmed here.

Texas German, a German dialect spoken by the first generations of settlers who initially refused to learn English

#### LOCAL TONGUE

Gullah, an English-based Creole language with strong West African influences, still spoken by Gullah people in the areas around Beaufort



# Destinations

Whether it's an extended vacation, a long weekend, or just a day-trip up the road, you've told us your favorite places to get away. From historic cities and tony hotels to small towns dripping with charm, we salute the exploration of *your* South.

**NO. 3: ATLANTA**  
Centennial Olympic Park, built for the 1996 Olympic Games, helped infuse new energy into downtown Atlanta and continues to be a great gathering spot.

## Best City

1. Charleston, South Carolina
2. Savannah, Georgia
- ◀ 3. Atlanta, Georgia
4. New Orleans, Louisiana
5. Nashville, Tennessee
6. Orlando, Florida
7. San Antonio, Texas
8. Asheville, North Carolina
9. Destin, Florida
10. Austin, Texas