

THE TREE... ANGEL OAK.



Height: 65 Feet

Circumference: 25.5 Feet

Area of Shade: 17,000 sq. Feet

Largest Limb: Circumference: 11.25 Feet
Length: 89 Feet

The Angel Oak is a Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) that is a native species found throughout the Low country (Coastal Carolina). Believed to be in excess of 1500 years old, its massive, draping limbs and wide spreading canopy present the aura of an angel but the naming of this tree was acquired from the tree's previous owners, Martha and Justin Angel.

Angel Oak (John's Island, South Carolina)

Reportedly the oldest thing -- living or man-made -- east of the Rockies, Angel Oak is a live oak tree aged approximately 1,500 years. Some locals simply call it The Tree. It stands in a wooded area along Bohicket Road of John's Island outside Charleston, South Carolina. You won't find a lot of stuff like tee shirt shacks around there, because basically the attraction is a single tree standing in a park. So keep an eye out for signs and drive slowly.- Duane Spurlock

Angel Oak is a live oak. It is native to the low country and is not very tall but has a wide spread canopy. Lumber from the live oak forests in the sea islands was highly valued for shipbuilding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Angel Oak stands on part of Abraham Waight's 1717 land grant. Mr. Waight owned several plantations. The City of Charleston now owns Angel Oak. There is no charge to view the tree and is a must see when visiting Charleston, South Carolina

For tourists who haven't visited Angel Oak, you should know that it is this state's most imposing work of nature, more impressive even than a plate of shrimp and grits. The Tree (one instinctively capitalizes the word when talking about this colossal vegetable) stands in an obscure wooded area of John's Island, some 12 miles beyond the Ashley River. The Tree is huge, and it is ancient. Estimates of its age run as high as 1,500 years.

Towering over 65 feet high, the Angel Oak has shaded John's Island, South Carolina, for over 1400 years, and would have sprouted 1000 years before Columbus' arrival in the New World. Recorded history traces the ownership of the live oak and surrounding land, back to the year 1717 when Abraham Waight received it as part of a small land grant. The tree stayed in the Waight family for four generations, and was part of a Marriage Settlement to Justus Angel and Martha Waight Tucker Angel. In modern times, the Angel Oak has become the focal point of a public park. Today the live oak has a diameter of spread reaching 160 feet, a circumference of nearly 25 feet, and covers 17,100 square feet of ground. www.historictrees.org

The Angel Oak is thought to be one of the oldest living things east of the Mississippi River. Acorns from the Angel Oak have grown to produce authentic direct-offspring trees.. Live oaks generally grow out and not up, but the Angel Oak has had plenty of time to do both, standing 65 ft high and with a canopy providing 17,000 square feet of shade. Its limbs, the size of tree trunks themselves, are so large and heavy that some of them rest on the ground (some even drop underground for a few feet and then come back up), a feature common to only the very oldest live oaks. It has survived countless hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and human interference, so there's a good chance it will still be there waiting for you.

In the spring and summer there are numerous artistic events, including the "Evening Under the Angel Oak" series, which feature music, dramatic presentations, and various other activities, especially during the Spoleto Festival in May/June. Keep an eye out for these, as they present an especially rewarding opportunity to visit this majestic figure. Jill Bahr, the choreographer of this particular "Rite," told me she was amazed to find that the entire Charleston Ballet company, 19 dancers, could hide behind the trunk of The Tree.

Angel Oak was damaged severely during Hurricane Hugo but has since recovered and grows on John's Island near Charleston, South Carolina.

