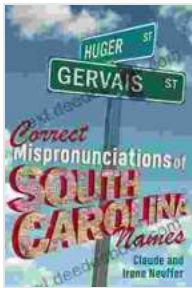# Unlocking the Secrets: How to Pronounce South Carolina's Trickiest Names Like a Local

South Carolina, a state steeped in rich history and vibrant culture, is home to a plethora of captivating place names that can leave visitors scratching their heads. From the enigmatic Beaufort to the enigmatic Sumter, pronouncing these names correctly is an art form in itself.

Correct Mispronunciations of South Carolina Names

by Bryan S. Bush

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Beaufort: The Silent "t" That Makes a World of Difference

At first glance, the pronunciation of Beaufort seems straightforward. However, the silent "t" at the end of the word throws many people off. To pronounce it like a local, simply drop the "t" and say "BYOO-fert."

Charleston: The Charleston Chew that's Not a Candy

Charleston, the charming coastal city, is often mispronounced as "CHAHR-leston." Locals, however, pronounce it with a soft "a" sound, like "CHAAHR-leston." Remember to emphasize the first syllable and you'll sound like a true Charlestonian.

Sumter: A Patriotic Pronunciation

Sumter, named after the Revolutionary War hero Thomas Sumter, often falls prey to mispronunciations. While many outsiders say "SOOM-ter," locals pronounce it with a "U" sound, like "SUMM-ter." This pronunciation pays homage to the general's Scottish heritage.

Columbia: The State Capital with a Hidden Twist

Columbia, the state capital, is another name that can trip up visitors. The temptation is to pronounce it like its namesake in South America. However, in South Carolina, the emphasis is on the second syllable, like "coh-LUM-bee-uh."

Myrtle Beach: The Beach that's Not a Myrtle

Myrtle Beach, the popular tourist destination, is often mispronounced as "MUR-tul Beach." Locals, however, pronounce it with a short "i" sound, like "MURT-ul Beach." This pronunciation reflects the fact that the beach is not named after the myrtle tree, but rather after the native myrtle berry.

Greenville: The "Green" that's Not So Green

Greenville, the thriving upstate city, is a bit of a linguistic puzzle. While the name suggests a lush, verdant landscape, locals pronounce it with a short "e" sound, like "GREN-vul." This pronunciation highlights the city's industrial roots rather than its natural beauty.

Other Tricky Pronunciations

- **Aiken:** Pronounced "AY-ken," not "AY-kun"

- **Orangeburg:** Pronounced "OHR-inj-burg," not "OR-inj-burg"

- **Lexington:** Pronounced "LECK-sing-tun," not "LEK-sing-tun"

- **Spartanburg:** Pronounced "SPAR-tun-burg," not "SPAR-tun-berg"

- **Winnsboro:** Pronounced "WINZ-buh-ruh," not "WINZ-boh-roh"

Mastering the pronunciation of South Carolina's place names is a surefire way to immerse yourself in the local culture. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or a first-time visitor, embracing these unique pronunciations will not only improve your communication but also earn you the respect of the locals. So next time you're navigating the Palmetto State, don't be afraid to ask for help or simply listen closely to how the locals say it. After all, pronunciation is a skill that can be honed with practice. And who knows, you might even impress a few South Carolinians along the way!

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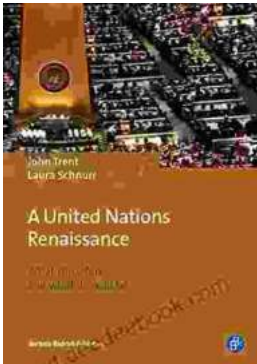|	
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