



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Thomas Jung

First Time in Orlando

Orlando, Kissimmee, 4 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Orlando is one of the destinations with so much to offer that it can actually feel pretty overwhelming for first-time visitors. We've compiled a list of the **MUST EXPERIENCE** points of interests to assist you in your trip planning - and hopefully make your visit easier, more enjoyable, and more memorable.

Orlando is basically made up of three main areas that most visitors want to experience. 1) Disney and Kissimmee area is where you'll find the sprawling Walt Disney World resort and the surrounding Kissimmee area is home to some additional tourist attractions such as Medieval Times.

2) The International Drive area (or I-Drive as the locals call it) houses Universal and SeaWorld theme parks (including Discovery Cove), as well as a ton of other attractions, chain restaurants and touristy nightlife spots.

3) Lastly, Downtown Orlando and it's northern suburbs like Winter Park is where you'll find more urban points of interests, independent restaurants, the art and culture scene, and a ton of marvelous outdoor park areas that should not be missed.

The I4 (Interstate 4) connects you to all three of these areas (with lots of outlet malls dotting the highway on route). Public transportation really isn't an option, but luckily, Orlando's car rental rates are kept fairly low due to enormous demand. Once you're on I-Drive or Downtown Orlando, you can easily and safely walk from place to place. Parking is pretty cheap and plentiful.


Probably one of Orlando's best features is its weather; the weather is great year-round, even during the very warm summer months when days spent lazing by the pool are ideal.


Itinerary Overview


things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife


Day 1 - Orlando, Kissimmee

DAY NOTE: Top 10 Things to Do - Here's a list of experiences that truly shouldn't be missed. If you're planning on a theme park day, it's best not to plan anything else for the evening since you'll probably want to stay late at the park for their fireworks show. Grab dinner at CityWalk or Downtown Disney. Group I-Drive stuff together and keep in mind that you can come back for a free second day at Kennedy Space Center if you don't get a chance to see it all in one visit. Make sure you get your ticket validated on the way out to take advantage of their return day program.

 **Discovery Cove**
Swim in tranquil waters among dolphins, tropical fish, and rays

 **Universal Studios Florida**
Dive into movie land with spectacular rides, shows, and real-life sets.


 **Blue Man Group Show at Universal Orlando Resort**
Zany and dynamic live show with music and stunts

 **iFly Orlando**
Indoor sky diving without the jump from the plane

 **Gatorland**
Alligators on Display

Day 2 - Orlando

DAY NOTE: Top 5 Restaurants: here's a list of restaurants that give visitors a great snapshot of edible Orlando. Located downtown, Ceviche not only pleases palates, but it's also ascetically amazing. A must see. The Ravenous Pig is a new local favorite about ten minutes from downtown that serves lots of locally produced veggies and meats. House and Blues and Rainforest Cafe are more theme-park located and will be major winners with the kids. Lastly, Seasons 52 makes the list because it continues to win local dining awards year after year - the food and service are very good and very reliable.

 **Ceviche**
Spanish cuisine and great live music


 **Seasons 52**

Seasonal and health-inspired menu that never skimps of flavor

Day 3 - Orlando

DAY NOTE: Top 5 Nightlife Venues: There are great nightlife options in all three of Orlando's main visiting areas (Disney, I-Drive, and Downtown) and all should be given a taste. Head to Downtown Disney for La Nouba and live bands at House of Blues. Downtown Orlando you'll find a bevy of great spots from hip little wine bars and lounges (Bosendorfer) to rockin' bars (Wall Street Plaza) and thumpin' nightclubs. Plus, downtown is where the patios are (Hue), always packed with a well-heeled but welcoming brood of revelers. Don't forget the I-Drive area - CityWalk is a good bet since there are about ten bars there and then there are a handful on I-Drive (Howl at the Moon and IceBar).

 **Bosendorfer Lounge**
Rare commodity

 **Howl at the Moon**
Pucker up and howl

 **Hue**
Sophisticated downtown eatery with a fab patio

Day 4 - Orlando

DAY NOTE: Top 5 Local Picks: You're not likely to find the locals around the major tourist areas (Disney + IDrive). Locals hangout Downtown and in the northern suburbs like Winter Park. This is where you'll find great outdoor spaces like impeccably maintained downtown parks (Lake Eola) and state parks teaming with wildlife (Wekiwa). This is also where you'll find local favorites like the Enzian (movie) theater, playing a steady blend of classic films and independent features. While you're in these neck of the woods, dine at one of the many independent and family-owned restaurants in places like Park Avenue and College Park.

 **Wekiwa Springs State Park**
Hike, kayak, or simply snorkel in the warm spring

 **Harry P. Leu Gardens**
50-acre botanical garden

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife



Lake Eola Park

Swans, strolling and a Sunday farmer's market



Enzo's Restaurant On The Lake

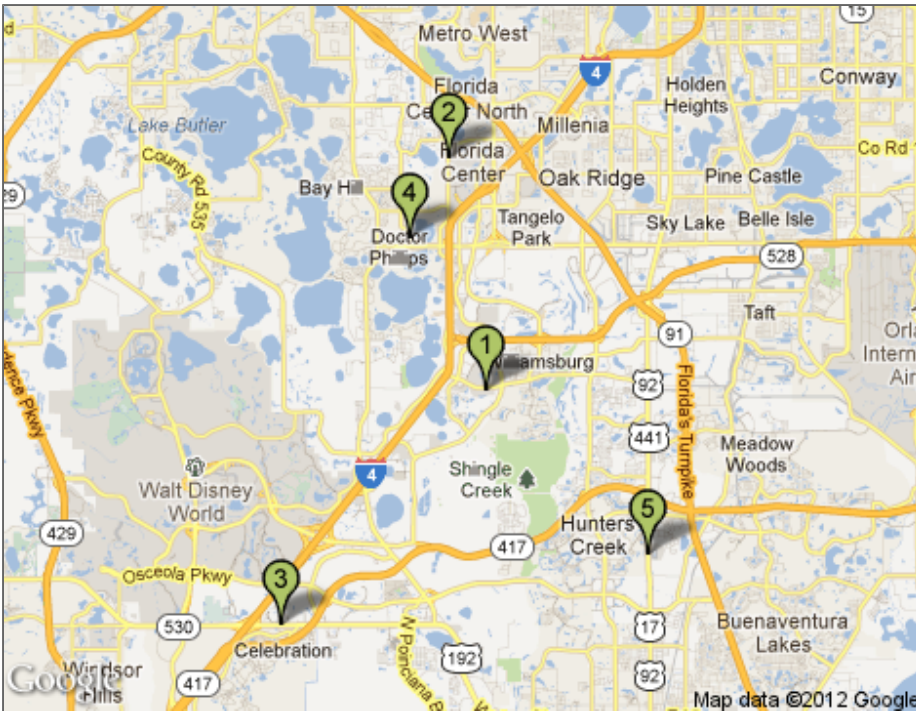
Dine with a view



Enzian Theater

Dinner and a flick

Day 1 - Orlando, Kissimmee



QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: +1 407 370 1280
<http://www.discoverycove.com>

location:
6000 Discovery Cove Way
Orlando FL 32821

1 Discovery Cove

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The park stays open late in the summer offering a twilight rate that includes dinner.

DESCRIPTION: In July of 2000, Discovery Cove opened its gates and began providing a unique theme park experience that is nothing short of extraordinary. With a maximum of 1,000 guests per day, the park has managed to create an intimate feel – more like you're visiting a swanky resort in the Caribbean than visiting a theme park in the middle of Orlando. The admission price, though hefty, includes all of your needs... towels, wet suits, lockers, snorkels, masks, sun tan lotion, souvenir photos and parking.

Meals and snacks are included as well (and not just hot dogs and hamburgers either). You'll start the day with a continental breakfast (pastries, muffins, fresh fruit, juices and coffee). You can have a hamburger for lunch if you'd like, but Discovery Cove also offers such items as grilled salmon and pasta



by Kristen Manieri

primavera. Unlimited snacks such as chips, pretzels, nachos, ice cream and smoothies are available all day. You can also enjoy as much bottled water, soda, beer, and cappuccinos as you like.

If you've booked yourselves into the Dolphin Encounter, the friendly concierge will schedule your time in the Dolphin Lagoon when you arrive. During the 30-minute encounter, you and 5-7 other guests will wade into shallow water and get up close and personal with a very sociable and playful Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin. Your trainer will guide the dolphin through a series of activities, allowing you to touch and instruct the dolphin. You'll also be able to experience a dorsal tow ride. For dolphin lovers, the extra admission price to include this encounter is definitely worth it.

When you arrive, you'll also want to check on the feeding times at Ray Lagoon so you can make sure to schedule that into your day. You can interact with dozens of rays of all sizes, some up to four feet in diameter. It's an amazing experience to be amongst these gentle and graceful creatures. The Coral Reef is where you'll really get to test your snorkeling skills as you float along amongst the hundreds of brilliantly colored tropical fish and rays. Make sure you find the shark encounter. Don't worry... they're behind thick glass.

You'll want to make several trips down the warm Tropical River, drifting in the slight current, under waterfalls, and through an underwater cave. The river also takes you through the Aviary, where you can hop out of the water and interact with over 250 exotic birds, none of which are caged. Having a toucan land on your arm is an interesting experience. Discovery Cove's beach is a great feature as well. Along the huge expanse of white, sugary sand, you'll find hammocks, umbrellas, and cabanas for your use. When all the swimming and snorkeling leaves you exhausted, grab a beach lounger and have a nap.

To avoid disappointment, reservations are a must!

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contact:

tel: +1 407 363 8000

<http://www.universalorlando.com>

location:

1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando FL 32809

2 Universal Studios Florida

DESCRIPTION: The world's favorite films and film stars come to life here, and 40 amazing and amusing rides, shows and attractions await. A virtual interactive Terminator 2:3-D adventure has its own set of thrills, as does an encounter with Jaws, a trip Back to the Future, and a voyage beyond the stars in an E.T. Adventure. Special VIP tours are available by pre-arrangement. © wcities.com



by Kristen Manieri

contact:

tel: (888) 340-5476
http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/Orlando/Blue-Man-Group-Show-at-Universal-Orlando-Resort/d663-3088 ORLBLU

location:

Universal Studios, 6000 Universal Blvd Orlando Florida 32819

3 Blue Man Group Show at Universal Orlando Resort

DESCRIPTION: It's hard to describe what the Blue Man Group is. Part live music, part comedy, part stunts, Blue Man sets the zany theatrics of three colorful characters against a fabulous live soundtrack that will have you dancing in your seats. It's difficult to peel your eyes off the stage glowing color and splashed with neon paint. Tucked inside Universal's CityWalk, Blue Man Group is an ideal evening activity before or after dinner and drinks at one of the many restaurants and clubs nearby.

© NileGuide



viator

contact:

tel: +1 407 903 1150
fax: +1 407 903 1906
http://www.iflyorlando.com/

location:

6805 Visitors Circle Orlando FL 32819

4 iFly Orlando

DESCRIPTION: This is the closest you can get to skydiving while still on the ground. Inside a huge simulator that looks more like a spacecraft than a building, visitors of all ages can experience skydiving in a wind tunnel or opt for the free-fall simulator. Either way, there's an experienced staff on hand to help calm your nerves, and there's plenty of padding in case you take a fall during your free-fall! © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of SkyVenture Orlando

contact:

tel: 800/393-5297
http://www.gatorland.com

location:

14501 S. Orange Blossom Trail Kissimmee FL 34837

hours:

Daily 9am-5pm, but closing times can vary by season

5 Gatorland

DESCRIPTION: Founded in 1949 with only a handful of alligators living in huts and pens, Gatorland now houses thousands of alligators (including a rare blue one) and crocodiles on its 70-acre spread. Breeding pens, nurseries, and rearing ponds are situated throughout the park, which also displays snakes, toads, insects, turtles, and a Galápagos tortoise. Its 2,000-foot boardwalk winds through a cypress swamp and breeding marsh.

The Screamin' Gator Zipline is the park's latest addition. It will open June 16.

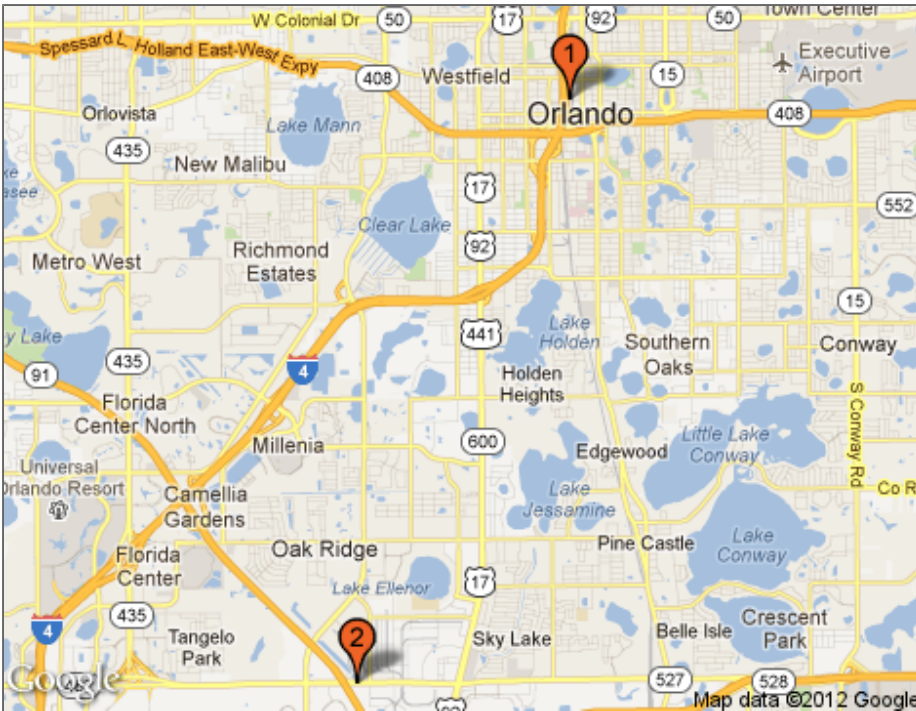
Headliners include **Gator Wrestlin'**, using the old "put-them-to-sleep" trick, but it's more of an environmental awareness program; **Gator Jumperoo**, a crowd-pleaser in which the parks largest reptiles lunge 4 or 5 feet out of the water to snatch a hunk of meat from a trainer's hand; **Up Close Encounters**, showcasing the park's toothy carnivores, slithery snakes, and other wildlife; and **Critters on the Go**, a mobile show that allows younger kids a chance to interact with the parks cuddlier critters. A **train ride**, a treat for younger kids and tots, runs through the park (\$2 per person); the **Gully Gator Splash Park**, a new wet-and-dry play area; and **Allie's Barnyard**, a small petting zoo. While you're here, try the smoked gator



by Kristen Manieri

ribs or nuggets in the open-air restaurant, or grab a gator-skin souvenir in the gift shop. Allow 4 to 5 hours. **Tip:** Look for additional parking, a refreshed facade with an open-air admission pavilion, and additional landscaping renovations coming soon. **Note:** Gatorland's **Trainer for a Day** program lets up to five guests get up close and personal with the gators for a day (or 2 hr., in this case). The \$125, 2-hour experience puts you side by side with trainers and includes a chance to wrangle some alligators (minimum age 12). Advance reservations are required, and admission to the park is included (and a 20% discount off a regular admission ticket is extended to up to six members of your party). A 1 1/2-hour Night Shine tour is also available (\$19.99, regardless of age) and takes you along the wooden walkways with only a flashlight and a guide (insect repellent and gator food is included). Advanced reservations are required. **Tip:** Printable discount coupons and special Internet ticket prices are available at the park's website. Be sure to check it out before you leave home. © Frommer's

Day 2 - Orlando



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Top 5 Restaurants: here's a list of restaurants that give visitors a great snapshot of edible Orlando. Located downtown, Ceviche not only pleases palates, but it's also ascetically amazing. A must see. The Ravenous Pig is a new local favorite about ten minutes from downtown that serves lots of locally produced veggies and meats. House and Blues and Rainforest Cafe are more theme-park located and will be major winners with the kids. Lastly, Seasons 52 makes the list because it continues to win local dining awards year after year - the food and service are very good and very reliable.

contact:
tel: +1 321 281 8140
<http://www.ceviche.com/3133>

location:
125 West Church Street
Orlando FL 32801

hours:
Mo from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Tu to Fr from 11:00 AM to 02:00 AM, Sa from 05:00 PM to 02:00 AM

1 Ceviche

DESCRIPTION: Ceviche Tapas Bar and Restaurant is situated in the heart of downtown Orlando in Church Street Station. It is one of the jewels of the city and a beauty to behold. The magnificent surroundings set the tone for a very special occasion. The craftsmanship and artistic touches throughout Ceviche includes stunning wood floors, wrought iron fixtures, sparkling chandeliers, dramatic tile mosaics, a luminous bar, cathedral ceilings and flawlessly set tables. The food includes over a hundred various tapas selections to pick from. The other dishes created here are true Spanish delights as well. The bar is completely stocked, there is an outside seating area, and Spanish guitarists and flamenco dancers entertain you too. - Diane Dilov-Schultheis © wcities.com



editor

contact:

tel: 407 354 5212

fax: +1 407 354 1109

<http://www.seasons52.com/>

location:

7700 West Sand Lake Road
Orlando FL 32836

hours:

Monday – Friday: 11:30 AM

– 10:00 PM (11:00 PM on

Friday) Saturday: 11:30 AM -

11:00 PM Sunday: 11:30 AM -

10:00 PM

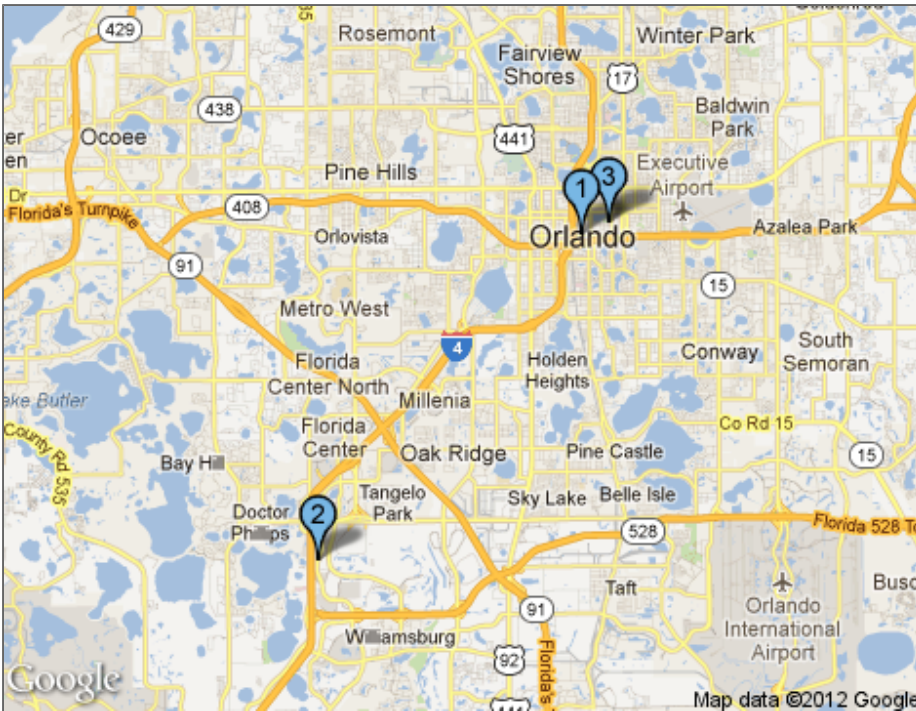
2 Seasons 52

DESCRIPTION: In tune with its name, the grill offers a seasonally changing menu with dishes prepared with utmost care and concern. All the ingredients used are fresh and devoid of fat; but that doesn't make them any less delicious. The main attraction is at the wine bar, where you are offered free tastings of 3 wines out of the elaborate collection of one hundred and forty. The gorgeous cuisine plus the sophisticated yet warm ambience ensure a memorable dining experience. For those in the mood for romance, patio seating, overlooking the Little Sand Lake, seals the deal! © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Seasons 52

Day 3 - Orlando



QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: 407 313 9000

fax: +1 407 313 9001

http://www.grandbohemianhotel.com/theboheme/bos_home.asp

tel.com/theboheme/bos_home.asp

location:

325 South Orange Avenue
Orlando FL 32801

hours:

Su-W 11a-midnight, Th
11a-1a, F-Sa 11a-2a

1 Bosendorfer Lounge

DESCRIPTION: Voted 'Best Place to Sip Martinis' by the Orlando Business Journal and 'Best Hotel Bar 2002' by Orlando Weekly, this lounge, located in the Westin Grand Bohemian Hotel, is one of the city's trendiest spots. Its original works of art, more than anything else, make it worth a visit. It also houses a Grand Bösendorfer piano - one of only two in the world. Check out the nightly specials - classics on Tuesdays, blues on Thursdays and contemporary Jazz on Friday and Saturdays. And once you've had your share of art and music, feast on hand-crafted appetizers and specialty cocktails. © wcities.com



photo courtesy of Bosendorfer Lounge

contact:

tel: 407 354 5999

fax: 407 354 5992

http://www.howlatthemoon.com/orlando_tonight.html

location:

8815 International Drive
Orlando FL 32819

hours:

M-Th 7p-2a, F 5p-2a, Sa
6p-2a, Su 7p-2a

2 Howl at the Moon

DESCRIPTION: After creating waves in Cincinnati, this nightclub has been doing the same in Orlando. A regular haunt for locals since its inception, it's the tunes played on the two centerstage pianos that keep guests highly entertained. A 'Showtime' special is announced every hour, in which employees and guests alike dance to the tunes of popular television shows and commercial jingles. Take your pick from the very innovative drinks menu - while the Sour Apple Martini will make you "pucker up and howl", the Electric Lemonade is "the most ELECTRIFYING cocktail in nightlife entertainment". So come on down and get ready to howl! © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: 407 849 1800

fax: 407 872 3348

<http://www.huerestaurant.com/>

location:

629 East Central Boulevard
Orlando FL 32801-2916

hours:

Brunch: Su 11:30a-3p, Lunch:
daily 11:30a-3p, Dinner: Su-W
3p-11p, Th-Sa 3p-midnight

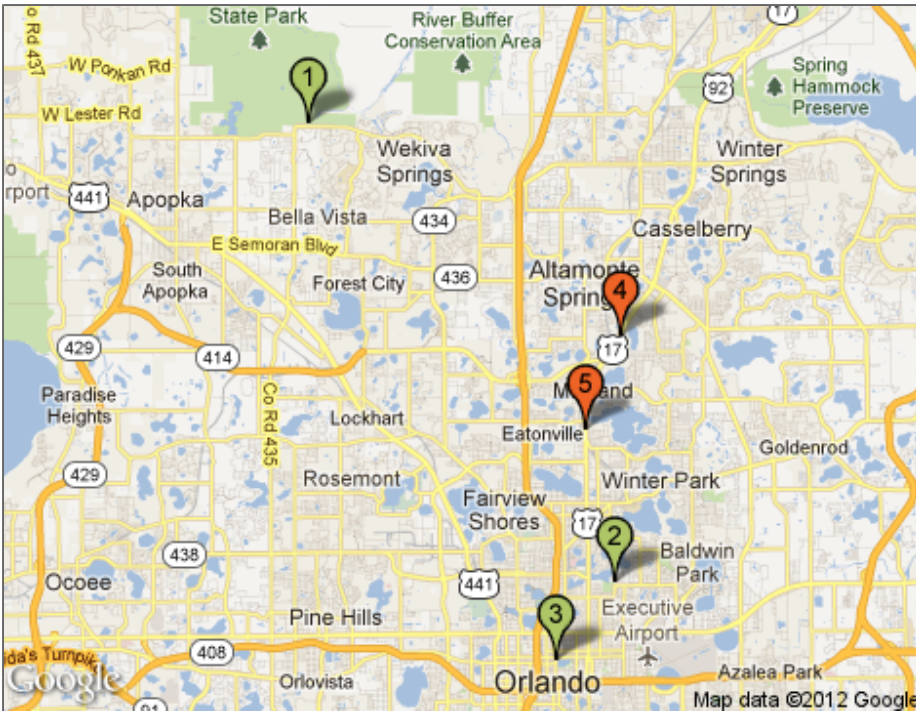
3 Hue

DESCRIPTION: The trendy decor with warm hues and shimmering lights adds to the unique dining experience at this upscale restaurant. The menu features an innovative mix of American cuisine with highlights, such as Seared Tuna, Wood-grilled meats and fish dishes. The happy hour definitely brings a smile to every diner's face as the rates are highly discounted. Participate in the 'Disco brunch' that's held every third Sunday of the month, where you can groove to the music and have an enormous platter to dine on. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Hue

Day 4 - Orlando



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Top 5 Local Picks: You're not likely to find the locals around the major tourist areas (Disney + IDrive). Locals hangout Downtown and in the northern suburbs like Winter Park. This is where you'll find great outdoor spaces like impeccably maintained downtown parks (Lake Eola) and state parks teaming with wildlife (Wekiwa). This is also where you'll find local favorites like the Enzian (movie) theater, playing a steady blend of classic films and independent features. While you're in these neck of the woods, dine at one of the many independent and family-owned restaurants in places like Park Avenue and College Park.

contact:

tel: +1 407 884 2008
fax: +1 407 884 2039
<http://www.floridastateparks.org/wekiwasprings/default.cfm>

location:

1800 Wekiwa Circle
Apopka FL 32712

1 Wekiwa Springs State Park

DESCRIPTION: Florida's fresh water comes from underground springs that rush through the state's underlying limestone base, known as an aquifer. Often, those springs bubble to the surface. You can see how that works at this 7,000-acre park where the waters are crystal - clear and stay at a comfortable 72 degrees all year. At this scenic spot, the headwaters of the Wekiwa (pronounced Wahk-EYE-vah) River, you can hike, camp, fish, go canoeing and, if you're lucky, spot some wildlife.
© wcities.com



contact:

tel: 407/246-2620
fax: +1 407 246 2849
<http://www.leugardens.org>

location:

1920 N. Forest Ave
Orlando FL 32803

hours:

Gardens daily 9am-5pm;
house daily 10am-4pm
(closed during July)

2 Harry P. Leu Gardens

DESCRIPTION: This 50-acre botanical garden is Orlando's equivalent to The Secret Garden: a maze bursting with color and unusual greenery. At Leu Gardens take a guided tour of the southern-styled grounds, chill at a concert or just run amok through the giant bamboo stalks, hyper-manicured lawns and Camellias (they have the world's largest collection). Better yet, its location on the shores of Lake Rowena affords a fitting view of the sunset.

© Frommer's

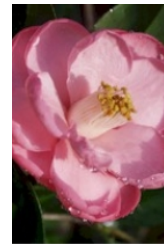


photo courtesy of Harry P. Leu Gardens

contact:

tel: +1 407 246 2827
http://www.cityoforlando.net/fpr/net/t_ParkRec.aspx

location:

1 N. Rosalind Ave.
Orlando FL 32801

3 Lake Eola Park

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Work off your vacation treats with a .9 mile stroll around the lake - it's the perfect workout

DESCRIPTION: A couple of hours can easily and peacefully drift away while strolling around Lake Eola Park, taking in the floating fountain and watching the white and black swans peacefully paddling across the lake. Established in 1888, the park's 43 acres of land are continuously enhanced with vibrant flowers, perfectly manicured grounds, and charming gazebos. The walking path circling the lake is 0.9 miles in length, perfect for enjoying a healthy stroll or vigorous jog. Shop at the Sunday Eola Market featuring fresh produce, artisan items, and a beer garden with live music. Swan rides are available for rent most days, and there is a restaurant tucked right inside the park called Eric's on Eola. There are about a dozen more restaurants within a short walking distance. © NileGuide



editor

contact:

tel: 1 407 834 9872
fax: 1 407 834 6647
<http://www.enzos.com>

location:

1130 South U.S. Highway
17-92
Longwood FL 32750

hours:

M-Th, Sa 6p-10p, F 6p-10p,
11a-2:30p

4 Enzo's Restaurant On The Lake

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Reservations are a must!

DESCRIPTION: More than 25 years ago, this enchanting Italian villa on the shores of Lake Fairy was converted into an outstanding family run restaurant. The old house was divided into several dining rooms, creating an ambiance of time-honored elegance and homespun grace. Come early to grab a glass of wine and enjoy it in their sculpture garden overlooking Lake Fairy. If you've timed it right, you might even be able to find a seat on the deck and watch the sun go down. This quiet and pretty area has been the site for many weddings and private parties. The food is simple, traditional, flavorful and homemade with only the freshest of ingredients. Start your meal with their famous Antipasti platter, a variety of house specialties. Then choose from pastas,



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seafood, meats, and poultry. Some dishes of note are The Dover Sole, the Spaghetti Alla Carbonara and the Penne Alla Vodka. Chances are, you won't be disappointed by anything you order here.

If you've saved room for dessert, you can enjoy conventional favorites such as tiramisu or Crème Brule, which is almost as smooth as the professional, polished service you'll be given by your server. The dining pace is slow and easy, leaving you lots of time to enjoy the cozy atmosphere. Valet parking is mandatory on busy nights and reservations are strongly recommended.

© NileGuide

contact:

tel: 407 629 0054

<http://www.enzian.org>

location:

1300 South Orlando Avenue
Maitland FL 32751

hours:

Show times vary; Call for details

5 Enzian Theater

DESCRIPTION: This theater/restaurant gives Central Florida perhaps its only opportunity to dine and watch a film at the same time. While watching a movie, usually a small art film or foreign film, you can feast on such Continental fare as chicken-topped pasta or whole snapper. You'll also find a variety of snack foods on the menu, with chicken wings a favorite. The café only serves food during show times, which vary, and it also hosts an annual film festival. © wcities.com

Orlando Snapshot

Local Info

Think of Orlando and the picture of an iconic, cheerful mouse is sure to come to mind. Disney World not only sprawls across hundreds of acres of land in Lake Buena Vista, located in Orlando's southwest, its impact on Orlando tourism has been even more sweeping. If not for the explosion of Disney World, perhaps neighboring megaparks like Universal Studios and SeaWorld may never have been born.

No doubt, most vacationers come to Orlando for the theme parks, and for good reason. There is more family fun packed into every square inch of Orlando than possibly anywhere else on the planet. From heart-dropping roller coasters to unforgettable live shows, Orlando's expansive parks are worth every penny of their admission price. Orlando offers an easy vacation for families- it's easy to get around, easy to find something to do, and easy to fly in and out of.

The standard week-long vacation is not even close to enough time to truly experience Orlando. A family could spend their entire stay within Disney World and still would only uncover a fraction of the delightful diversions available. Besides days spent inside Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Animal Kingdom, and the recently renamed Hollywood Studios (formerly MGM Studios), visitors can also book themed dinners with beloved characters, rent watercraft for

traversing Disney's inner waterways, visit two Disney water parks, and take behind-the-scene tours... and this still would only scratch Disney's surface. You wouldn't want to miss shopping and dining at Downtown Disney, as well as shows like Cirque du Soleil's La Nouba and the House of Blues's Gospel Brunch.

Those who manage to break from Disney's tender grip are quickly swallowed up at Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure. These two parks are packed with spectacular rides as well as a huge entertainment, shopping and dining complex known as CityWalk. And the fun doesn't stop there.

Yet, there is life beyond the theme parks. While it's difficult to compete with the color and gusto of Disney and its neighbors, there's actually a lot happening outside of the theme park zone. Downtown's walkable streets offer a robust dining and nightlife scene as well as some unique boutiques and a handful of theaters and museums.

When the locals grow weary of the theme parks, which they quickly do, they're more likely to be found strolling around Lake Eola Park that boasts the famed fountain and amphitheater. Here you'll find a few popular eateries hugging its shores, a place to rent swan boats, and an awesome Sunday farmer's market crowded with downtown hipsters enjoying its beer garden and live bands.

Winter Park, with its posh boutiques, million-dollar homes, and chic cafes and restaurants is also a superb spot for an afternoon of strolling, shopping and snacking. Even non-shoppers love Winter Park thanks to its museums, scenic boat tours, and well-manicured park spaces.

Wherever you spend your time during your Orlando visit, you'll likely describe Orlando locals as friendly and unpretentious. Orlando isn't a big city like New York or LA, and it knows it. Sure, Orlando people glam it up at nightclubs and can spend wads of cash like any big city slicker, but they're not a snobby bunch. They're used to sharing their space with visitors and can be amiable and obliging if you're ever in need of a local tip.

Besides theme parks, I-Drive, and a handful of quaint urban corridors, the beach is just over an hour away. Cocoa and New Smyrna are closest and both are great for families, couples, and singles. Drive an extra hour west and you'll be at the Gulf. In fact, Orlando is one of the best starting off points for any Florida-exploring vacation. The airport is a direct flight from every major city in North America and there is so much more to see within a two to three hour drive of this great city.

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