



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Thomas Jung

Top Kid-Friendly Attractions in Orlando

Orlando, 4 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Guide written by Kara Mayer Robinson and Jen of Two Kids and a Map.

It doesn't really matter if you're a fan of the mouse or not-Orlando is a no-brainer when it comes to pleasing the whole family. This kid-centric city makes little ones so happy that it brings smiles to everyone on board, making family trips run super-smooth.

There are endless activity options for kids in and around Orlando. You may feel a bit rushed, but it is entirely possible to visit two Disney parks in one day. Allow plenty of time for the shuttle to take you to each park. If you will be in Orlando for more than four days, purchase the four day pass and visit one park each day..

Note: Be sure to read the Day Notes for the kid-friendly details on recommended attractions.

Ciao Bambino provides tips and advice around all things related to traveling with kids and is a guide to the best kid friendly hotels.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Orlando

DAY NOTE: Disneyworld A trip to Orlando wouldn't be complete without a visit to Disneyworld, but there's no law saying you absolutely have to hit the Magic Kingdom. Maybe you've been there already or maybe characters aren't your thing. No worries-these days there are plenty of alternative theme parks to choose from and tailoring your visits to your interests is a smart way to enjoy your vacation even more. Epcot Epcot's an oldie-but-goodie that often appeals to school-age kids who've developed an interest in the world at large. Disney's Hollywood Studios is another option that appeals to kids (and adults) of all ages.



International Drive

Theme Park Hub

Day 2

DAY NOTE: Be sure to bring your animal lovers to Animal Kingdom for plenty of close encounters with the wild kind. Water junkies should head straight for Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach for oodles of water slides (hello, Slush Gusher!) and hot-weather soothers.

Day 3 - Orlando

DAY NOTE: Downtown Disney: Moviegoers will want to catch a flick at Downtown Disney, the host of 24 (!) movie theatres. Shoppers also have good reason to flock here. But we have yet another reason to hit this branch of Disneyworld-the food. If you haven't been introduced to the cuisine of Wolfgang Puck or Gloria Estefan, here's your chance. And what's better than doing it at a low cost and in a kid-friendly environment? Top off a meal at Wolfgang Puck's or Bongo's Cuban Café with a delectable sundae at the Ghirardelli Soda Fountain, a San Francisco-based chocolate company that has an outpost right here in Orlando. Besides the food, shops and theaters, Downtown Disney is a winner for Lego-lovers. In addition to a fully stocked store with billions of Legos that kids can play with for hours on end, you'll get a kick out of the Lego sculptures, including the life-sized family (dog included) and the sea serpent that weaves in and out of a lake. Downtown Orlando: Did you know there's an actual downtown in Orlando that most tourists have no idea exists? Spend an afternoon touring the real Orlando, a few miles east on Interstate 4 (aka I-4). Start with a stroll around Lake Eola (take a float in a swan boat while you're there), then head up to Winter Park, a gorgeous, tree-lined village that has lots of green space, gourmet coffee shops and locally-owned boutiques. Grab a cup o' joe, stroll into one of the town's five museums and, if you time

it right, catch one of its seasonal festivals. Map out your day at www.ci.winter-park.fl.us and www.cityoforlando.net.



Orlando Science Center

Hands-On Exhibits



Lake Eola Park

Swans, strolling and a Sunday farmer's market



Downtown Orlando

City's Hub

Day 4 - Orlando



Universal Studios Florida

Dive into movie land with spectacular rides, shows, and real-life sets.



Islands of Adventure

Unbelievable roller coasters and character encounters



SeaWorld Orlando

Dolphin shows, sea lions, and rides at Shamu's theme park

Day 1 - Orlando



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contact:

tel: +1 407 248 9590

fax: +1 407 248 9594

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

location:

International Drive
Orlando FL 32819

1 International Drive

DESCRIPTION: Home to SeaWorld Orlando, Discovery Cove, Wet 'n Wild water park, Islands of Adventure, and Universal Studios Florida, International Drive is a theme park lover's paradise. Also a popular shopping destination, you can find 485+ shops ranging from designer boutiques to bargain outlet malls. At Orlando Premium Outlets, you will find designer outlets such as Armani Exchange, Salvatore Ferragamo, Dior, and BCBG Max Azria. Visit the Festival Bay Mall at International Drive to catch a movie, play a round of mini golf, shop, and dine at the many restaurants onsite. Servicing International Drive is the air-conditioned I-Ride Trolley Service to help get you from place to place. Operating daily, the cost is USD1 per ride for adults, 25 cents for seniors, and free for kids under 12 accompanied by an adult. © wcities.com

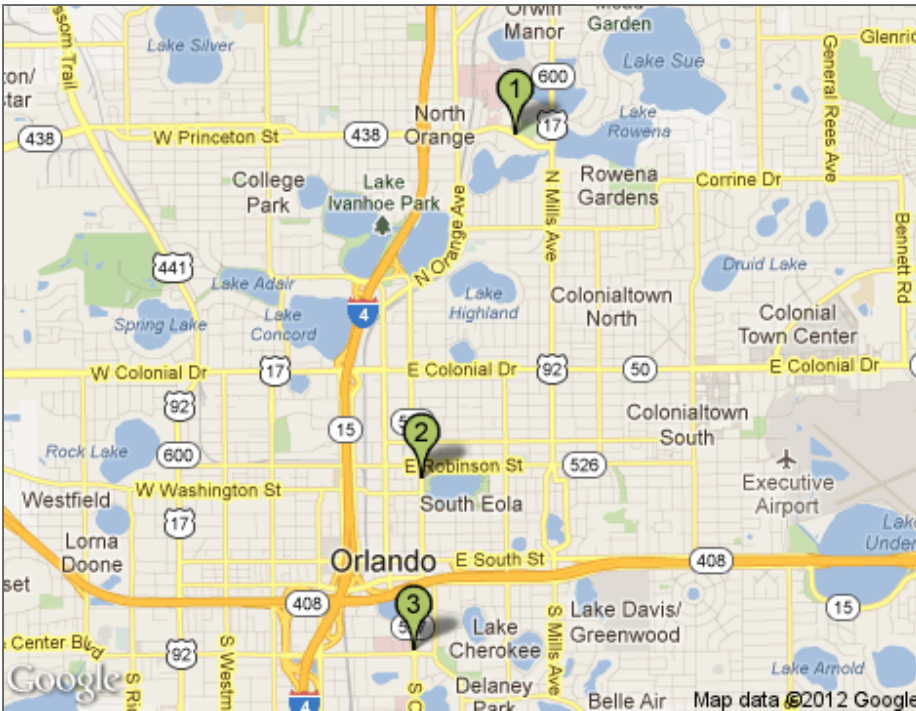


International Drive

Day 2

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contact:

tel: 888/672-4386

fax: +1 407 514 2277

<http://www.osc.org>

location:

777 E. Princeton St

Orlando FL 32803

hours:

Sun-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat

10am-9pm

1 Orlando Science Center

DESCRIPTION: The Orlando Science Center is four floors of fascinating fun. The innovative center, the largest of its kind in the Southeast, provides 10 exhibit halls that allow visitors to explore everything from Florida swamps to the arid plains of Mars to the human body. One of the big attractions is the **Dr. Phillips CineDome**, a 310-seat theater that presents large-format films, planetarium shows, and laser-light extravaganzas. Just a small sampling of what you can expect includes exhibits such as **KidsTown**, where little folks wander in exhibits representing a miniature version of the big world



Photo courtesy of Orlando Science Center

around them. In one section, there's a pint-size community that includes a construction site, park, and wellness center. **Dr. Dare's Laboratory** is a "classroom of tomorrow" that includes interactive computer displays, and **NatureWorks** uses replicated Florida ecosystems to teach kids about the environment. Dino Digs, TechWorks, Xperience Factory, and Cool Science are some of the other exhibits that await you. Look for the Super Service Center, a Construction Site just for kids, and the Kids Kitchen all coming soon. Allow 3 to 4 hours, more if you have an inquiring mind © Frommer's

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

location:
1 N. Rosalind Ave.
Orlando FL 32801

2 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

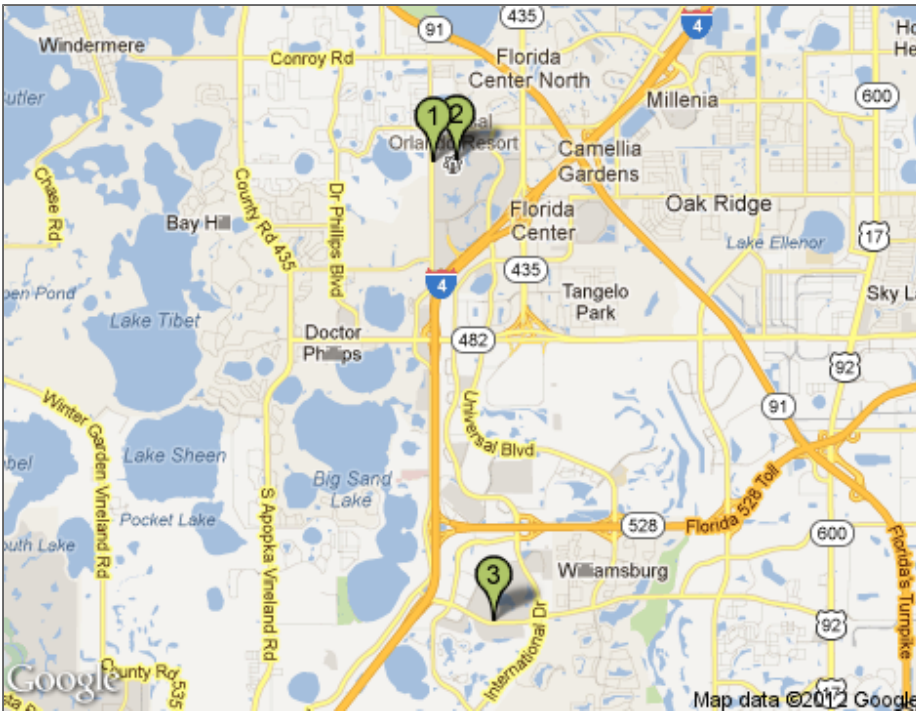
contact:
tel: +1 407 363 5872

location:
South Orange Avenue
Orlando FL 32801

3 Downtown Orlando

DESCRIPTION: Downtown Orlando is the main commercial and entertainment hub of the city. Easily accessible from any route, this area has lush parks and gardens, schools, sports and recreational areas, hospitals, art and cultural center and financial institutions in its vicinity. From high-priced boutiques, shopping malls to the bargainable local shops, the residents have loads of choices to splurge. The chain of popular restaurants located here make this an ideal haunt for any food lover. All in all, a place that caters to the different needs of the locals and the visitors. © wcities.com

Day 4 - Orlando



QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +1 407 363 8000
<http://www.universalorlando.com>

location:
1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando FL 32809

1 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: +1 407 839 3900
http://www.universalorlando.com/Amusement_Parks/Islands_of_Adventure/islands_of_adventure.aspx

location:
1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando FL 32819

2 Islands of Adventure

DESCRIPTION: This trill-a-minute innovative theme park is every adventure lover's fantasy come alive. Fasten your seat belts and be ready to plunge from heights, experience a shark attack or set your adrenaline pumping with action-packed earthquakes and tornadoes. To savor the once-in-a-lifetime experience, try their pulse pounding roller coasters, psychological thrill rides or nerve-wrecking challenges where you get to attempt stunts. Greet your favorite comic characters, legends and super heroes in the motion based 3-D action rides or try your luck in the fun-filled video arcade. Watch dinosaurs in their natural habitat and Spider man in action, when he takes on his enemies in the ultimate battle. This far from average theme park is certainly not for the weak-hearted! © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Islands of Adventure

contact:

tel: +1 407 351 3600
http://www.seaworld.com/

location:

7007 Sea World Drive
Orlando FL 32821

3 SeaWorld Orlando

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Lots of places to have a picnic if you want to bring in your own lunch

DESCRIPTION: One of the first theme parks to open in Orlando, SeaWorld has been operating here for more than 30 years. The 200 acres of attractions and animal shows make this a perennial favorite with Florida visitors. Many new attractions and rides have been added to the original fun including a laser-fireworks-water extravaganza and high-tech thrill rides. © wcities.com



by Kristen Manieri

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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