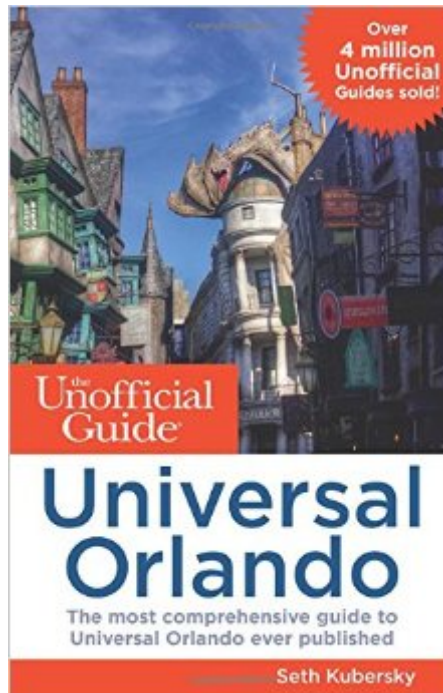


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The Unofficial Guide To Universal Orlando



Synopsis

Compiled and written by a former Universal Orlando employee, and based upon decades of research from a team whose work has been cited by such diverse sources as USA Today and Operations Research Forum, The Unofficial Guide to Universal Orlando is packed with detailed, specific information on every ride, show, and restaurant in the resort, including insider insight on Harry Potter's Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley attractions. Step-by-step detailed touring plans allow you to make the most of every minute and dollar during your Universal Orlando vacation. Where to find the cheapest Universal Orlando admission tickets, how to save big on Universal on-site hotel rooms and skip the regular lines in the parks, when to visit Universal Orlando for the lightest crowds, and everything else you need to know for a stress-free Universal Orlando experience.

Book Information

Series: Unofficial Guide to Universal Orlando

Paperback: 360 pages

Publisher: Unofficial Guides (August 18, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1628090308

ISBN-13: 978-1628090307

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (51 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #19,763 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in [Books > Travel > United States > Florida > Orlando](#) #17 in [Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Theme Parks](#) #21 in [Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Tourist Destinations & Museums](#)

Customer Reviews

I found the first half of this book to be extremely useful. The background information on planning, accommodations, etc. was top notch, 5-stars. We followed all of the planning advice and had a wonderful time at Universal Orlando, with minimal time waiting in lines. Who could ask for more? I also found their advice on things like butterbeer (frozen is definitely the best) and refillable drinks to be very helpful. Overall, though the second half of the book was too much information for me. The simple, "we recommend eating at Fast Food Boulevard" that was included on the Touring Plan was enough. We had no desire to research and memorize the profiles of every restaurant in Universal, Islands of Adventure, and CityWalk (and I definitely don't want to carry a book around all day).

Same goes for the rides. Reading detailed descriptions of every ride sort of spoils the fun, no? The biggest problem with the book is that publishing requires long lead-times and things at USF/IOA are always changing so imagine my dismay when the Touring Plan told us to visit three attractions that are no longer there (Beetlejuice Graveyard Review, Twister, and Disaster!). Not temporarily closed, like the Hulk coaster, but completely, permanently gone. Not a great way to start our visit. On day two, we switched over to using their app, but it listed incorrect showtimes for multiple shows and left us standing around, trying to decide what to do (exactly what the book and app are designed to prevent). So, buyer beware.

I have loved the Unofficial Guide series for years, and since we are planning a Universal trip for next year, it was very exciting to find this brand new guide dedicated to Universal. Some of the tips and reader comments are the same as ones published in the Walt Disney World version, but only where relevant. The author's voice is similar to that found in the other Unofficial Guides, so there is a refreshing honesty and authenticity to the information. The restaurant reviews and ride descriptions are very thorough, and I am more excited than ever about our upcoming trip. The book also includes great information about both on-property resorts and nearby hotels.

If you are a planner and don't like to walk into unknown situations, you will like this book. The planning information on hotels etc., was helpful, although the information on the Universal hotels tells you little more than the hotel websites (e.g., can you figure out whether you can easily buy breakfast at the Cabana Bay?-- I couldn't-- no mention that the "diner" is a gigantic cafeteria or the difference between the various buildings). My husband loved the Touring Guides at the end of the book. I have to say that two hours into them, I was ready to throw them in the lake. They would have been more necessary if we had been at the parks during a peak holiday season. But we weren't. Most people are there to see the Harry Potter stuff so the Plans' advice to do that early in the morning was great. But then it has you criss-crossing across the two parks in a truly exhausting manner. After stamping my feet a bit, I convinced my husband to stay in one park for the day and use the free Universal app to monitor wait times. It worked well for us (April, mid-week) partly because we had a "buy a 2-day pass, get a 3rd day free" which was advertised this spring. The book did not account for any touring that would take more than 2 days. I found the description of the rides useful, because I am very prone to motion-sickness. The advice given on whether or not to purchase Express pass was spot-on. We found the restaurant guide very useful.

It took a few weeks to slog through the book before our trip, but it RADICALLY improved every facet of our family's Spring Break 2016 Universal Trip. We benefitted on hotels, express passes, dining, and wait times. The book does plug their touring plan smartphone app and website which was also worth EVERY penny. You even get a discount on the app if you bought the book. Several other families took the same trip over the same number of days that we did and only covered a quarter of what we were able to get done. I felt sorry for their kids once they were done talking with our kids! One family didn't even ride one of the Harry Potter rides due to waiting in lines and we were able to ride it five times in under 1 hour the same day (I'm dead serious)! There is one catch: You MUST be willing to wake up VERY EARLY for this to work. If you want to squeeze every drop of value out of your Universal vacation this is the tool to do it.

I am planning a trip to Orlando with some friends later this year (November 2015). It will be the first time I've been there in over twenty years. I purchased THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO UNIVERSAL ORLANDO as a tool in my planning. We will be spending about three days at Universal Orlando and Universal Orlando Islands of Adventure. This book has been really helpful as it discusses not only the parks, but also the traffic, hotels, eateries, etc. It's very informative and I would recommend it to newbies or people like me who haven't been there in ages.

Great addition to the Unofficial Guides lineup. It's about time UOR had its own book. Seth K., the main author, has written with other travel writing teams so glad to see him working with the Unofficial/Touring Plans group now. A very approachable and humorous book packed with info that's actually useful. The Unoff. Guides to WDW and DLR are the first I buy when planning a Disney trip. This one on UOR is just as great.

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