



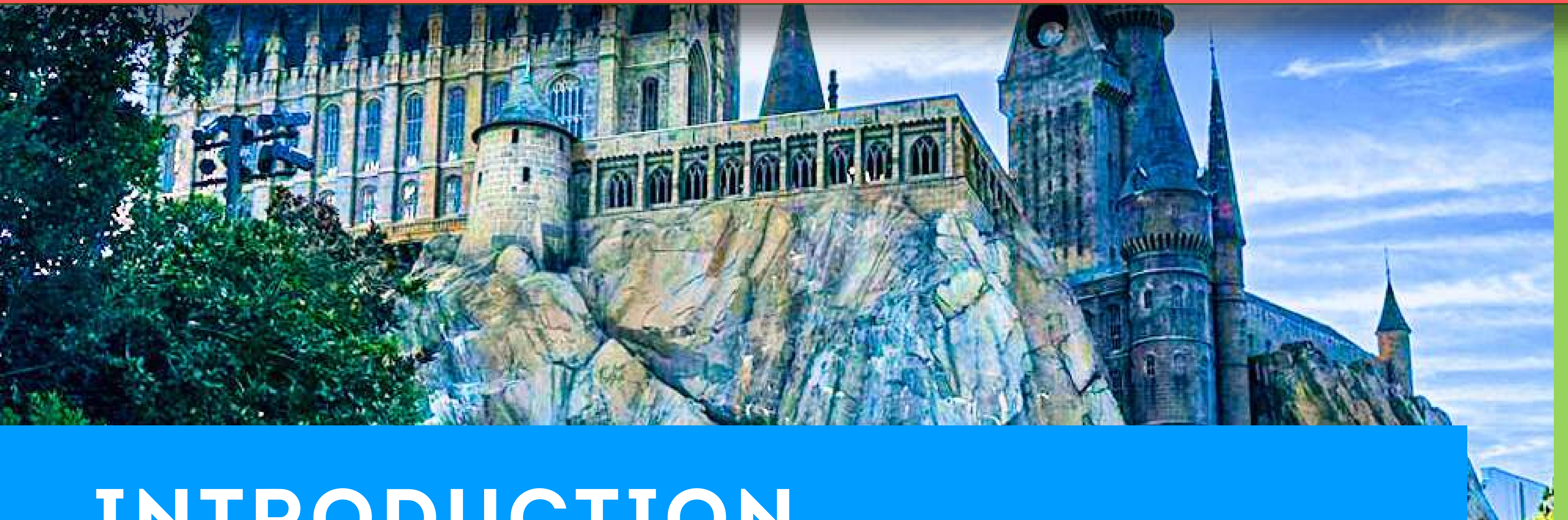
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THIS GUIDE IS RETIRED
LAST & FINAL UPDATE: MAY 2025



This guide has been retired. But good news—we've got another great one to help you plan your next Universal trip.

CHECK OUT HOTELS AT UNIVERSAL ORLANDO



INTRODUCTION

Wizards, minions, and monsters – oh MY! When it comes to immersive theme park offerings, Universal Orlando has plenty to offer! Before you head into the park, make sure you download the free **Universal Orlando Resort app** to help keep track of your day.

Universal Orlando is made up of **THREE theme parks**, the **Volcano Bay** water park, and the **CityWalk** shopping and dining district, which is also the central drop-off point for Universal's buses.

Follow us for even more news, reviews, and tips!



One of the theme parks is **Universal Studios Florida**, which drops you into your favorite movies and TV shows to live out these stories in real life. Another park is **Universal Islands of Adventure** – a place full of mythical, fantastical areas where you can race raptors, develop superpowers, cast spells, and so much more.

And the third park is **Epic Universe** – Universal's NEWEST theme park that officially opened on May 22nd, 2025, giving us the chance to enter different portals to experience lands like Dark Universe, SUPER NINTENDO WORLD, How To Train Your Dragon: Isle of Berk, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter: Ministry of Magic, and Celestial Park.



WHAT'S NEW

In 2024, Universal Studios Florida opened **an immersive land** centered around DreamWorks characters, like **Kung Fu Panda, Trolls, and Shrek**.

And in 2025, Universal Orlando opened its **THIRD** theme park, **Epic Universe**, as well as **THREE** new resorts – **Stella Nova, Terra Luna, and Helios Grand Hotel**.

With the opening of Epic Universe, Universal has now added **more attractions, entertainment, dining, and shopping experiences** to its theme park offerings. Plus, the signature Helios Grand Hotel is the **first Universal resort to have a dedicated entrance into one of the parks**. This entrance puts guests in the middle of Celestial Park inside Epic Universe!



Also, note that **Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit is set to close** in early September 2025. A new experience will take its place.

GETTING TO THE PARKS

Universal offers its hotel guests three main ways to navigate around the property:

First, you've got the **Universal buses**, which pick up guests at designated stops around the Universal Resorts and drop them off at either the CityWalk entrance OR the Epic Universe entrance. (Keep in mind that a bus ride to Epic Universe averages about 15-20 minutes.)



Then, you've got the **water taxi** option – a small boat that picks up guests at certain Universal resorts and drops them off near the theme park entrances. (Not including Epic Universe.)

And finally, there are scenic **walkways** that you can use, connecting a few Universal Orlando Resorts to an exit that spits you out near Islands of Adventure. If you're staying at the new **Stella Nova** prime value hotel, this resort has a **walking path leading up to Epic Universe's** front gate. **Helios Grand** makes things even more convenient for Epic Universe guests with a **dedicated entrance** that leads you straight into Celestial Park. Terra Luna does not have a dedicated park entrance or walking path, but the bus ride over to Epic Universe is fairly short.

If you're not planning on staying at a Universal-owned hotel during your next trip, you can drive over and park in Universal's **multi-tiered parking garage OR Epic Universe's designated parking lot**.

Regular parking is typically around \$32 per day, while **Prime parking can range between \$50-\$60**, depending on how busy the parks are.

Be ready for the **security check**, which'll happen before you enter CityWalk or Epic Universe.



ATTRACTIONS

Much like Disney, each Universal park has characters you can **meet and greet** during the day. In Universal Studios Florida, expect to see character like Scooby Doo and the Mystery Gang, the Minions, Transformers, the Simpsons, and the Bikini Bottom residents. Meanwhile, in Islands of Adventure, you'll find raptor encounters, Marvel heroes, Dr. Seuss townsfolk, and classic comic book friends! Epic Universe has brought NEW character encounters to the parks, so NOW you can meet classic Universal monsters, as well as new/familiar friends from How to Train Your Dragon and the fan-favorite Nintendo games.

Each of the park's Wizarding Worlds features roaming characters, streetmosphere performers, and – unique to Epic Universe – you've also got the **Le Cirque Arcanus** acrobatic show to experience, as well!

Universal Studios Florida is home to three live performances – **The Bourne Stuntacular**, **Animal Actors on Location!**, and **Universal Orlando's Horror Make-Up Show**. Stage shows aren't as present in Islands of Adventure, but you can experience **The Grinchmas Wholiday Spectacular** during the holiday season!

Along with Le Cirque Arcanus, Epic Universe has one more stage show – **The Untrainable Dragon** – over in Isle of Berk, which brings DRAGONS to life in a unique way!



PARADES AND NIGHT SHOWS

Depending on when you visit Universal Studios Florida, you might be able to catch the **Mega Movie Parade**, with floats featuring a mixture of classic and new films such as Jurassic Park, Ghostbusters, Trolls, and more. This parade does not happen daily, so check the show schedule on the Universal website before you go for updated showtimes.



The BIGGEST nighttime show you're gonna find in Universal Orlando is **CineSational: A Symphonic Spectacular**, over at Universal Studios Florida. This show takes place on the lagoon and features iconic movie scores from movies like Jaws, Harry Potter, and How to Train Your Dragon. The show also utilizes fountains, projections, and other state-of-the-art tech to celebrate the magic of music in the art of storytelling.



At select times throughout the year, the Hogwarts Castle, over in Islands of Adventure, will feature a nighttime projection show. The most recent show is **Hogwarts Always**, which celebrates a full year of studying witchcraft and wizardry.

Over at Epic Universe, the **Cosmos Fountain Show** in Celestial Park entertains guests at the end of the day with illuminated jet streams accompanied by familiar musical scores inspired by the worlds behind each portal.

VOLCANO BAY

Volcano Bay is Universal's one and only **water park** in the Orlando area. You can find it branched off the main Universal Orlando resort hub (right along with Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios Florida). However, this park is situated more toward Universal's Aventura Hotel.

The attractions are located in **four themed areas**, each inspired by various Polynesian islands and cultures.



The centerpiece of the park is Krakatau, a 200-foot-tall volcano that has waterfalls during the day and lava at night. The park's icon serves as the base for four different slides: **Krakatau Aqua Coaster**, **Ko'okiri Body Plunge**, **Kala & Tai Nui Serpentine Body Slides**, and **Punga Racers**.

Along with several other rides and slides, Volcano Bay is also home to the **Waturi Beach** – a multi-directional **wave pool** where guests can choose to swim or relax on the sand...or both!

There are **two types of lazy rivers** at Volcano Bay. The truly lazy/relaxing one is **Kopiko Wai Winding River**, which flows through hidden caves, has shimmering nighttime lighting, and features unpredictable water effects.

Then, you've got **TeAwa The Fearless River**, which is anything but your traditional lazy river! This swift-moving river is more of a ride where the current will speed you along the rapids! (You **MUST** wear a lifejacket to experience this one.)

IMPORTANT: Starting on October 1st, 2025, **Volcano Bay will be discontinuing its TapuTapu virtual queue system**. All rides after that will be available via standby line only.



UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA RIDES

RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Harry Potter and the Escape From Gringotts	Diagon Alley	42"	●
Despicable Me Minion Mayhem	Minion Land	40"	●
Villain-Con Minions Blast	Minion Land	Hand-held infants not permitted	●
Revenge of the Mummy	New York	48"	●
E.T. Adventure	KidZone	34"	●
Fast and Furious: Supercharged	San Francisco	40"	●
Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit	Production Central	51"	●

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UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA RIDES

RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Kang and Kodos' Twirl 'n' Hurl	Springfield, USA	–	●
MEN IN BLACK Alien Attack	World Expo	42"	●
Race Through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon	New York	40"	●
The Simpsons Ride	Springfield, USA	40"	●
TRANSFORMERS: The Ride 3-D	Production Central	40"	●
Trolls Trollercoaster	DreamWorks Land	36"	●

NOTE

Universal rides with no height requirement will still require kids under 48 inches to have a supervising companion join them on the ride.

Since many of Universal's rides do have height requirements, your group may want to use the free **"child swap"** program. Each ride has

a family room where someone in your group will be able to hang back with the kiddos while the rest of your group gets in line for the ride. Once the first group finishes riding, they can swap with members in the family room – meaning whoever rode first can now stay back with the kids, and the adult(s) who sat out can go enjoy the ride.



ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE RIDES

RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Jurassic World VelociCoaster	Jurassic Park	51"	●
Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure	Hogsmeade	48"	●
Jurassic Park River Adventure	Jurassic Park	42"	●
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey	Hogsmeade	48"	●
Caro-Seuss-el	Seuss Landing	–	●
Doctor Doom's Fearfall	Marvel Super Hero Island	52"	●
Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls	Toon Lagoon	44"	●
Flight of the Hippogriff	Hogsmeade	36"	●
One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish	Seuss Landing	–	●
Popeye and Bluto's Bilge-Rat Barges	Toon Lagoon	42"	●

ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE RIDES

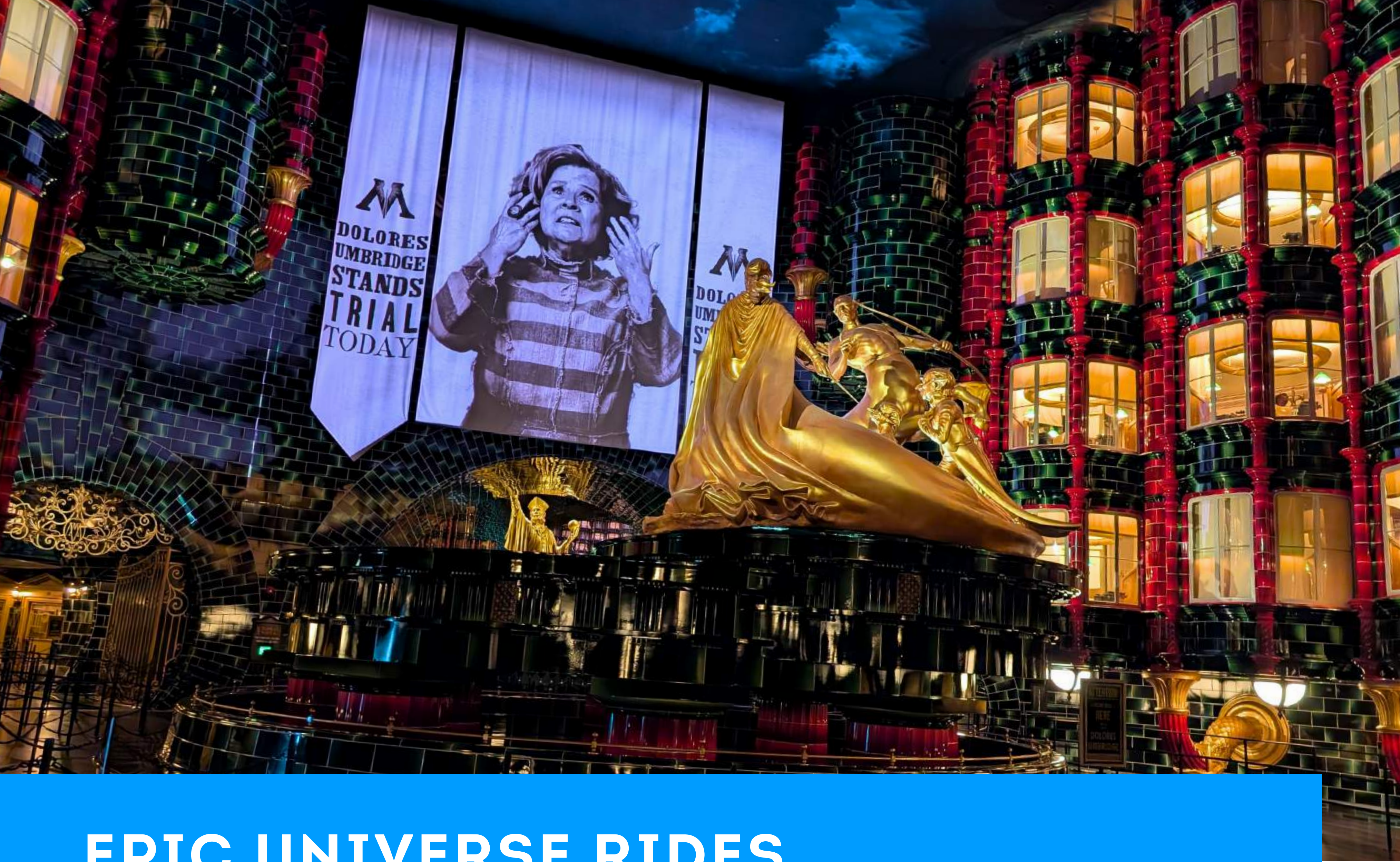
RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Pteranodon Flyers	Jurassic Park	36" Min 56" Max	
Skull Island: Reign of Kong	Skull Island	36"	
Storm Force Accelatron	Marvel Super Hero Island	–	
The Amazing Adventures of Spider Man	Marvel Super Hero Island	40"	
The Cat in the Hat	Seuss Landing	36"	
The High in the Sky Seuss Trolley Train Ride	Seuss Landing	36"	
The Incredible Hulk Coaster	Marvel Super Hero Island	54"	

HOGWARTS EXPRESS

The Hogwarts Express can be found in both WIZARDING WORLD sections of each Universal park. But to use the train, **you MUST purchase a Park-to-Park ticket**, which grants entrance into BOTH Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure on the same day.

While the Hogwarts Express is a fun little ride, it mostly serves as a way to connect the **Hogsmeade Station (at Islands of Adventure)** with **King’s Cross Station (at Universal Studios Florida)**.

If you’re planning on climbing aboard the Hogwarts Express, have your park-to-park ticket out and READY as you approach the entrance to either station, since **it’ll need to be scanned before you can board the train.**



EPIC UNIVERSE RIDES

RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Constellation Carousel	Celestial Park	Hand-held infants not permitted	●
Curse of the Werewolf	Dark Universe	40"	●
Dragon Racer's Rally	Isle of Berk	48"	●
Fyre Drill	Isle of Berk	Hand-held infants not permitted	●
Harry Potter and the Battle at the Ministry	Ministry of Magic	40"	●
Hiccup's Wing Gliders	Isle of Berk	40"	●
Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge	SUPER NINTENDO WORLD	40"	●



EPIC UNIVERSE RIDES

RIDE	LOCATION	HEIGHT REQUIREMENT	AVERAGE WAIT TIME
Mine-Cart Madness	SUPER NINTENDO WORLD	40"	●
Monsters Unchained: The Frankenstein Experiment	Dark Universe	48"	●
Stardust Racers	Celestial Park	48"	●
Yoshi's Adventure	SUPER NINTENDO WORLD	34"	●

NOTE

Currently, The Battle at the Ministry has a **virtual line system** in place to help pace out the ride’s demand. You can grab your spot in the virtual line via the Universal Orlando app.

The virtual line typically goes live daily at **11 AM, 3 PM, and 6 PM**.

Getting in the Virtual Line can be tricky, but don’t lose hope! We have a whole page of virtual line hacks that you can check out [HERE!](#)

If all else fails, The Battle at the Ministry also has a **single rider line** you can try for as well.

BEST RESTAURANTS - UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA

Finnegan's Bar & Grill is a cozy Irish pub that serves beer on tap and comfort food galore.

If you love all things seafood, then **Lombard's Seafood Grille** is the Universal restaurant for you!

Straight out of the Harry Potter books and films, **The Leaky Cauldron** puts you in a spacious (and slightly grungy-looking) restaurant that serves up traditional British favorites.

Cafe La Bamba keeps things quick with its menu of Southern California Mexican-inspired eats.

Minion Cafe is a Quick Service restaurant COMPLETELY devoted to those li'l yellow sidekicks.

While several of the Simpsons-based Quick Service restaurants aren't exactly phenomenal, **Cletus' Chicken Shack** does have some pretty tasty fried chicken entrees.

Trolls Treats in DreamWorks Land features Trolls-inspired ice cream – including flavors like Poppy-licious Pink Lemonade and the huckleberry-flavored BroZone Berry.

The items at **Central Park Crepes** are LOADED with sweet and savory ingredients, making the portions huge and the flavors super tasty.



BEST RESTAURANTS - ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE

The Three Broomsticks is a rustic tavern where you can grab some British fare – and a Butterbeer, too!

Mythos is an award-winning table service featuring Mediterranean, Asian, and American fare in a mythical setting.

Blondie's will hook you up with deli sandwiches, subs, footlong hot dogs, and even the piled-high Dagwood sandwich—all made to order.

For safe and familiar theme park eats, head to **Captain America Diner** and pick up a cheeseburger, chicken sandwich, chicken fingers, or crispy chicken salad.



Confisco Grille is a Table Service restaurant towards the front of the park, featuring a full menu of Asian, Mediterranean, and Greek-inspired cuisines.

The name speaks for itself: **Green Eggs and Ham Cafe** serves...well...Green Eggs and Ham, of course! (PLUS tator tots!)

Thunder Falls Terrace is right next to the Jurassic Park River Adventure ride, and serves items like rotisserie chicken, BBQ ribs, rice bowls, salads, and more.

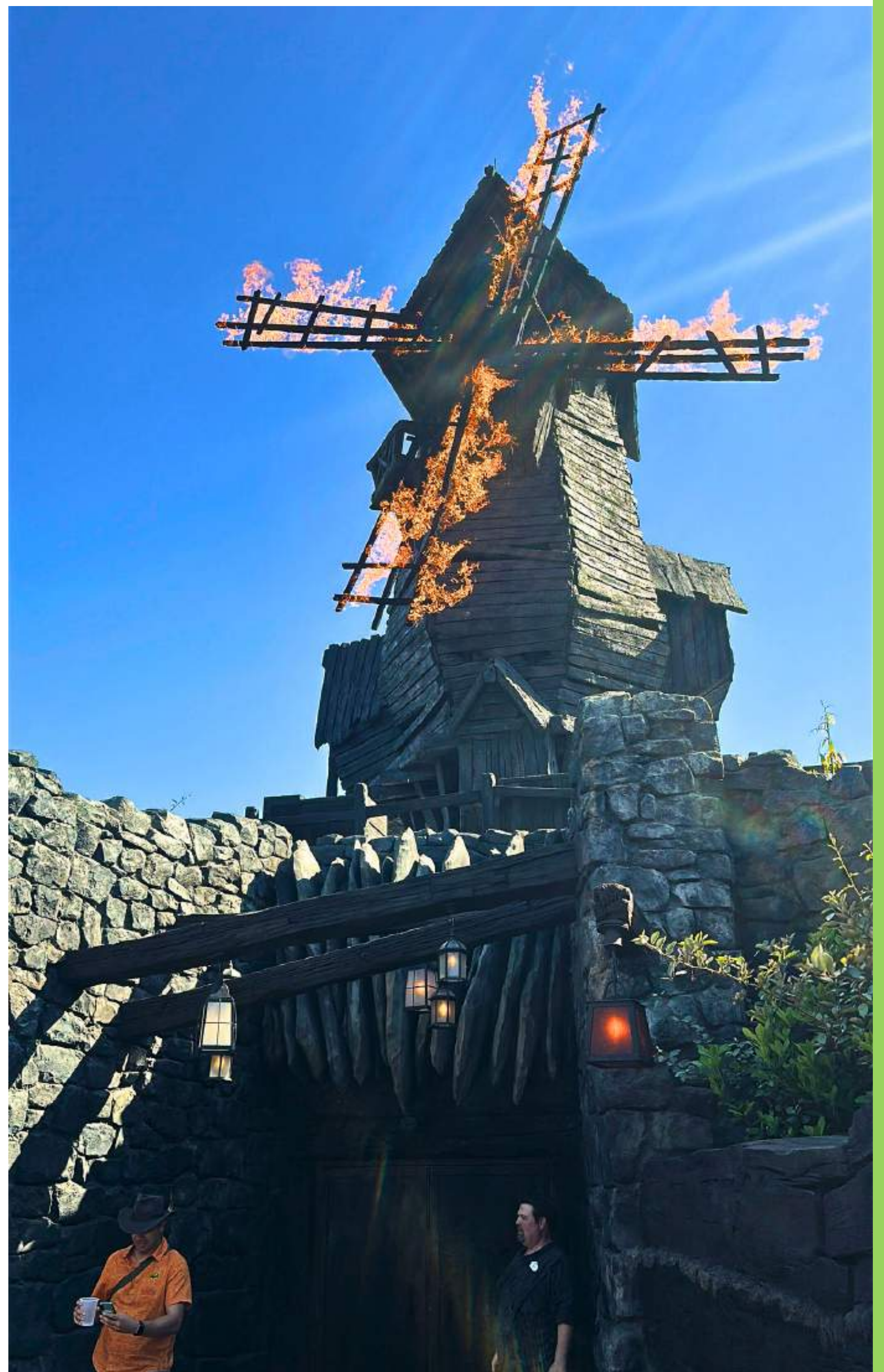


BEST RESTAURANTS - EPIC UNIVERSE

Toadstool Cafe in SUPER NINTENDO WORLD features specialized Mario-inspired meals, snacks, and desserts – all prepared by those lovable Toads!

Found in Dark Universe, **The Burning Blade Tavern** is a Quick Service restaurant that gives diners the chance to eat in an old mill transformed into a monster hunter hangout! (Note: The windmill bursts into flames several times throughout the day!)

Isle of Berk invites guests into **Mead Hall** – the main gathering place for vikings of all ages. Here, you can enjoy savory Quick Service eats, as well as a variety of meads and ciders (if you're 21+).



Hooligan's Grog and Gruel in Isle of Berk serves a variety of Mac and Cheese Cones to fuel your inner Viking!

Café L'Air De La Sirène is a Quick Service restaurant inside the Wizarding World where guests can delight in French sandwiches, plats du jour, and desserts, including the viral Butterbeer Crepe!

The Oak & Star Tavern serves Quick Service barbecue in the heart of Celestial Park.



PACK LIGHT!

Several popular Universal rides require you to use their provided lockers to store your bags and other belongings. Fortunately, the **standard-sized lockers are free** and will easily hold small bags, purses, wands, wallets, and phones. But, if you're carrying around something much bulkier, then you're gonna have to **pay an extra \$2 for one of the larger lockers**.



SINGLE RIDERS

Many of Universal's rides have a **single rider queue** that can help you cut down on those attraction wait times. While this can be a great way to save time without you having to spend an extra cent, **your party WILL be split up** if you use these queues.



EXPRESS PASS

Much like Disney, Universal ALSO has pay-to-skip-the-lines options that you can add onto your trip. First, there's the **Universal Express** (which you can use once per ride), AND then there's **Universal Express Unlimited** (which you can use multiple times per ride). While these passes can be as pricey as \$119.99-\$349.99 per ticket, **guests who stay at one of Universal Orlando's signature tier resorts (except for Helios Grand) will receive these passes for FREE!**

NOTE: Free express passes are not valid at Epic Universe.



EPIC UNIVERSE

Let’s do as much as possible in Epic Universe in a single day! Epic Universe typically opens at 9 AM, but on select mornings, resort guests may be able to take advantage of Early Park Admission to get an extra hour in SUPER NINTENDO LAND and Celestial Park. Our itinerary assumes you’ll be staying off-property, entering the park right when it opens, and skipping the Express Pass purchase.



MORNING

Scan into the park	9:00 AM
Monsters Unchained	9:30 AM
Curse of the Werewolf	10:30 AM
Enter Virtual Line for Battle at the Ministry (You’ll have two more chances at 3 and 6 PM)	11:00 AM
Head to Le Cirque Arcanus for 11:30 AM show (showtimes are subject to change)	11:10 AM
Lunch Break! (Nearby: Cafe L’Air de la Sirene)	12:45 PM

AFTERNOON

Battle at the Ministry (Note: Virtual Line return times will vary)	1:20 PM
Hiccup’s Wing Gliders	2:30 PM
Dragon Racer’s Rally	3:45 PM
Snack break! (Nearby: How to Treat Your Dragon)	4:30 PM
Get in line for 5:15 PM Untrainable Dragon show	4:50 PM
Mario Kart: Bowser’s Challenge	5:55 PM
Mine-Cart Madness	7:00 PM
Dinner! (Nearby: Toadstool Cafe)	8:00 PM
Stardust Racers	8:30 PM
Park Closes (Note: you might still be line for Stardust Racers after park closure)	9:00 PM



ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE

To make the most of any park visit, a well-thought-out plan is key! Islands of Adventure typically opens at 9 AM, but on select mornings, resort guests may be able to take advantage of Early Park Admission to get an extra hour in the park before everyone else. Our itinerary assumes you'll be staying off property, entering the park right when it opens, and skipping the Express Pass purchase.



MORNING

Scan into the park	9:00 AM
Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure	9:30 AM
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey	10:45 AM
VelociCoaster	12:00 PM
Lunch Break! (Nearby: Thunder Falls Terrace)	1:00 PM



AFTERNOON

Jurassic Park: River Adventures	2:00 PM
Skull Island: Reign of Kong	2:45 PM
Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls	3:30 PM
Popeye and Bluto's Bilge-Rat Barges	4:30 PM
Use a "People Dryer" (for a \$5 fee)	5:15 PM
Hulk Coaster	5:45 PM
The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man	6:30 PM
Dinner! (Nearby: Captain America Diner)	7:25 PM
The Cat In The Hat	8:00 PM
Hogwarts Castle nighttime show (if available; check app for updated times)	8:30 PM
Park closes	9:00 PM





UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA

Time to spend a FUN day in Universal Studios Florida! Much like Islands of Adventure, Universal Studios Florida typically opens at 9:00 AM, but on select mornings, resort guests may be able to take advantage of Early Park Admission to get an extra hour in the park before everyone else. Our itinerary assumes you'll be staying off-property, entering the park right when it opens, and skipping the Express Pass purchase.



MORNING

Scan into the park	9:00 AM
Escape From Gringotts	9:30 AM
Transformers 3D	10:30 AM
Revenge of the Mummy	11:30 AM
Race Through New York: Starring Jimmy Fallon	12:25 PM
Lunch Break! (Nearby: The Today Cafe)	12:55 PM



AFTERNOON

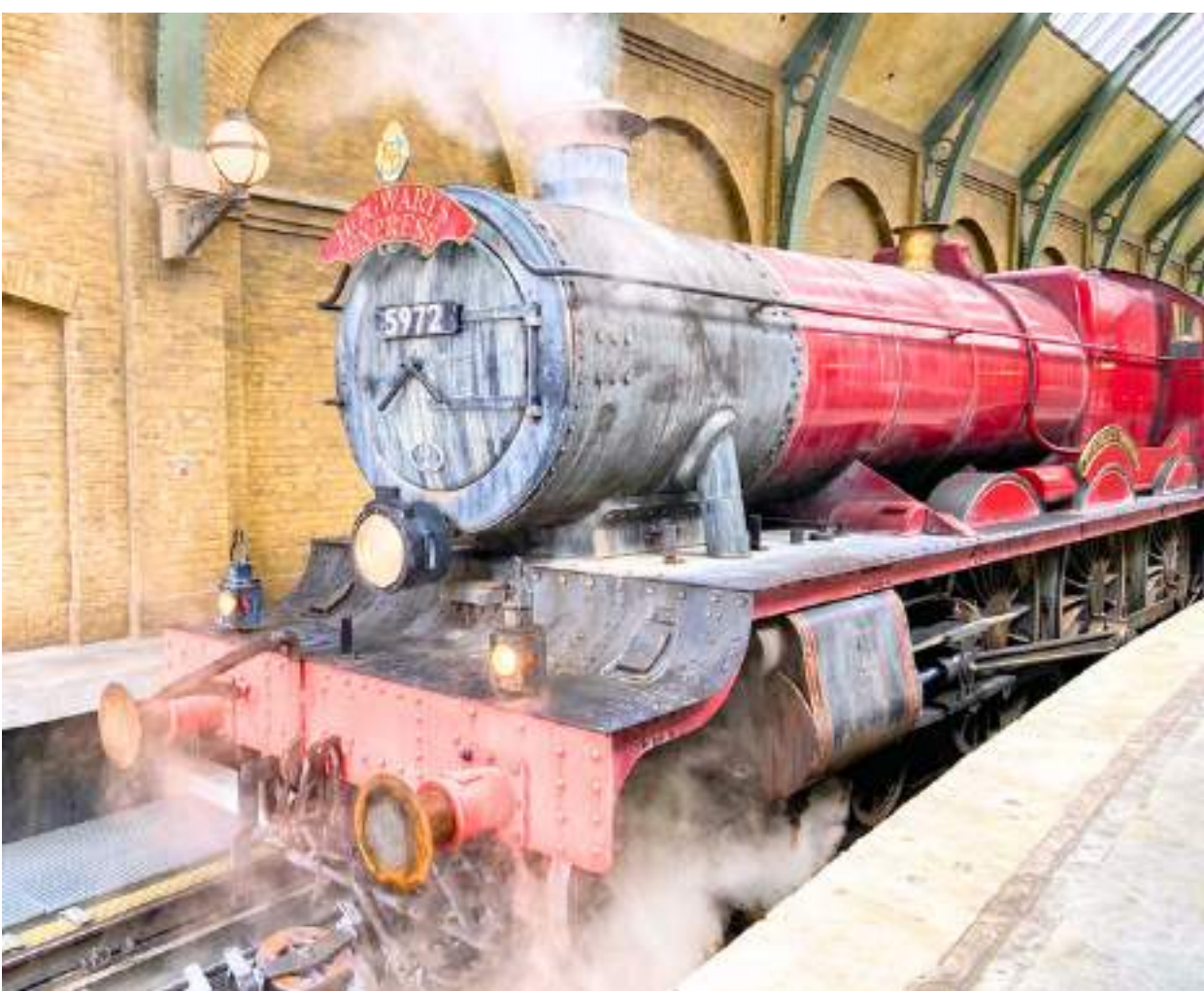
Watch the 2 PM Mega Movie Parade	1:55 PM
Explore DreamWorks Land	2:45 PM
ET Adventure	3:30 PM
The Simpsons Ride	4:15 PM
Men in Black: Alien Attack	4:50 PM
Fast and Furious Supercharged	5:45 PM
Villain-Con Minion Blast	6:30 PM
Dinner! (Nearby: Minion Cafe)	7:25 PM
Despicable Me: Minion Mayhem	8:00 PM
Find spot for CineSational (Show starts at park closing)	8:45 PM





ONE DAY, TWO PARKS

If you only have one day to explore Universal Studios Florida and Islands of Adventure, then you're going to need a game plan! Express passes can help you accomplish more rides in a shorter amount of time, but this itinerary will assume that you'll be staying off-property, entering Islands of Adventure right when it opens, and skipping the Express Pass purchase.



MORNING

Scan into Islands of Adventure	9:00 AM
Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure	9:30 AM
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey	10:45 AM
VelociCoaster	12:00 PM
Lunch Break! (Consider: Three Broomsticks)	1:00 PM

AFTERNOON

The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man	2:00 PM
Ride Hogwarts Express to Universal Studios Florida	3:30 PM
Escape From Gringotts	4:25 PM
Revenge of the Mummy	5:30 PM
Villain-Con Minion Blast	6:00 PM
Despicable Me Minion Mayhem	6:45 PM
Dinner! (Nearby: Minion Cafe)	7:00 PM
TRANSFORMERS The Ride 3-D	7:15 PM
Race Through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon	8:15 PM
Park closes/CineSational Nighttime Spectacular!	9:00 PM



WIZARDING WORLD OR BUST!

Witches and muggles alike may want to spend ALL of their park day in the Wizarding World areas. Just remember – if you want to explore Diagon Alley AND Hogsmeade in a single day, you will need a multi-park ticket. This itinerary will assume that you'll be staying off-property, entering Universal Studios Florida right when it opens, and skipping the Express Pass purchase. Note that this does NOT include the Ministry of Magic area in Epic Universe.



MORNING

Scan into Universal Studios Florida	9:00 AM
Harry Potter and the Escape From Gringotts	9:30 AM
Ollivanders	10:25 AM
Use interactive wand to cast spells	11:15 AM
Watch Tales of Beedle the Bard (check park app for show times)	11:45 AM
Lunch Break! (Nearby: Leaky Cauldron)	12:25 PM
Floean Fortescue's for dessert	1:00 PM

AFTERNOON

Board Hogwarts Express and head to Islands of Adventure	1:35 PM
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey	2:35 PM
Flight of the Hippogriff	3:30 PM
Watch Triwizard Spirit Rally (check park app for show times)	4:15 PM
Shopping!	4:45 PM
Cast more interactive spells	5:25 PM
Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure	5:50 PM
Dinner! (Nearby: Three Broomsticks)	7:15 PM
Hogwarts Castle nighttime show (if available; check app for updated times)	8:15 PM
Park closes	9:00 PM



UNIVERSAL ORLANDO IS WAITING FOR YOU!

Getting HYPED for your upcoming Universal trip? You should be! And we're hyped for you, too, which is why we've designed THESE Universal-inspired tees to help make your theme park adventures all the more thrilling (and STYLISH)!

Whether you're chillin' with the minions, solemnly swearing that you're up to no good with the wizards, or putting on a brave face before meeting any Universal monsters, we've got a variety of designs and styles for you to choose from – for ANY Universal occasion – over at dfbstore.com!

YOUR ADVENTURE IS JUST BEGINNING!