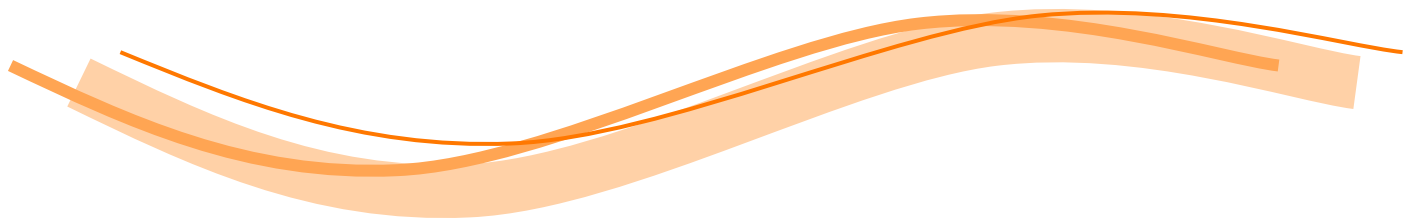




**ORLANDO, FLORIDA**





## ORLANDO

There are thousands of ways that Orlando will make you smile! From the world-famous theme parks and outdoor adventure, to exquisite dining and shopping - unique, smile-filled memories are waiting to be made in Orlando.

Visit [www.VisitOrlando.ca](http://www.VisitOrlando.ca) to plan your next family vacation. Orlando is great value and very affordable – and you'll also discover offers and packages designed especially for Canadians.

The adventure, magic, and endless excitement of this sunny destination brings people together and strengthens relationships. Smile with the ones you love, get pampered, get thrilled and get happy. Just make sure you get to Orlando!

Ever changing and ever growing – family friendly Orlando has endless possibilities! There's something for every age group, and so much that the generations can enjoy together. It is the ideal place for families to relax, reconnect and have fun. There is so much to do in Orlando that they say it would take 67 days to see it all!

There are new rides and innovations at all the theme parks. Enjoy the fabulous year-round weather at hotels, resorts and water parks with over-the-top pools, rides, and water slides. Orlando offers fabulous golf and spa opportunities. The shopping extends from luxury brands to phenomenal bargains and there are new stores offering ever wider choices. Orlando has evolved into a true culinary destination, with everything from fine dining to casual eateries and a diverse array of international cuisines. And you're just a short drive from some of America's very best beaches.

### **Focus on the Theme Parks**

#### **Universal Orlando**

Universal Orlando offers two World Class Theme Parks. Jump into the action of the movies at Universal Studios Florida®, then head next door to Universal's Islands of Adventure.

Islands of Adventure is where you can experience the magic and excitement of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Join Harry Potter and his friends as you soar above Hogwarts Castle, coming face-to-face with magical creatures! Climb aboard one of two dragons in a high-speed roller ride across the sky in Dragon Challenge. And take off on Flight of the Hippogriff, a family-friendly coaster.

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You can also swing high above the city streets with Spider-Man like never before on The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man®. Marvel at the new high-definition animation, high-tech 3-D glasses, upgrades to the audio, lighting and more.

Now Open at Universal's Islands of Adventure - "TRANSFORMERS: The Ride-3D". Prepare for the greatest battle you'll ever ride! The new TRANSFORMERS: The Ride-3D is an ultra-immersive, next generation thrill ride that blurs the line between fiction and reality! As a N\*E\*S\*T recruit, you'll find yourself on the front lines of an intergalactic war between the Autobots and Decepticons.

### **SeaWorld Orlando**

No trip to Orlando is complete without visiting the World Class theme parks of SeaWorld and Aquatica. Experience pulse-pounding, state-of-the-art rides together with up-close encounters with playful dolphins, polar bears, tigers, and giraffes. And snorkel with colorful fish, glide with rays or hand-feed exotic birds.

Find out what it's like to spin, glide, skim and fly like a giant ray when you experience Manta® – the only flying roller coaster of its kind in the world. Riders are taunted by a head-first, face-down inverted nosedive... and that's just the beginning.

With TurtleTrek – live the 3D, 360 journey! TurtleTrek showcases the incredible life journey of the sea turtle. From hatching on a beach and making the mad dash to open waters to the dangers and hazards they face as they mature and return to the very same beach to lay their own eggs- the tales of life underwater have in the past been impossible to show.

Now Open at Seaworld Orlando – "Antarctica - Empire of the Penguin" Get transported into the rarely seen and icy world of Antarctica. You'll feel the majestic grandeur of the South Pole and see it through the eyes of a penguin named Puck on an exhilarating, first-of-its-kind family adventure ride. You'll be able to choose a "mild" or "wild" version of this trackless, motion-based simulator experience. After you step off the ride, you'll explore the penguins' colony and observe the penguins' antics any time on the live Penguin Cam!

### **Walt Disney World**

Magic Kingdom captures the enchantment of fairy tales with exciting

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	<p>entertainment, classic attractions, beloved Disney Characters and so much more.</p> <p>Now Open at Disney's Magic Kingdom® Park - Fantasyland expansion though 2014 - Fantasyland will nearly double in size! The initial phases of New Fantasyland are now open—with spectacular additions scheduled through 2014.</p> <p>The Enchanted Forest - Meet some favorite Disney Characters in Enchanted Forest, inspired by The Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast. Here, you can venture through lush landscapes, discovering roaring waterfalls and royal castles along the way.</p> <p>Storybook Circus - Step right up to the classic American circus in an area that evokes the spirit of the classic Disney film Dumbo. Storybook Circus transports Guests to another era—a period in time when the colorful big-top tents attracted audiences from far and wide with astonishing stunts, majestic animals and spectacular entertainment.</p>
<p><b>Oct 2013 Update</b></p>	<p>Thanks to one of the largest expansion periods in Orlando history, visitors can be among the first to experience brand-new attractions in every corner of the theme park capital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help save the world from the Decepticons in TRANSFORMERS: The Ride – 3D or walk the streets of Springfield in the world's first Simpsons themed area at Universal Orlando Resort.</li> <li>• Meet Cinderella, Rapunzel and other Disney princesses in the Castle Courtyard located in the center of New Fantasyland at Walt Disney World Resort's new Princess Fairytale Hall.</li> <li>• Get transported into the icy world of the penguin on a first-of-its-kind family adventure ride, Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin at SeaWorld Orlando.</li> <li>• Follow animal warriors on magical journeys at LEGOLAND Florida's new area, the World of Chima, based on the Cartoon Network animated TV series.</li> <li>• Come face-to-face with the Space Shuttle Atlantis and learn the history of NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle Program at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.</li> </ul> <p>Home to seven of the world's top theme parks, Orlando continues to reinvent itself in 2014 with brand-new hotels, innovative expansions and entertainment venues for the whole family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walt Disney World Resort is completing its New Fantasyland expansion at Magic Kingdom Park, with the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train</li> </ul>

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	<p>Coaster, set to open spring 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Orlando Resort is expanding The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, a new area themed after Diagon Alley and 'London,' featuring shops, a restaurant and a marquee attraction based on Gringotts bank.</li> <li>• SeaWorld Orlando will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first SeaWorld park in San Diego with a "Sea of Surprises," starting March 21. The celebration will include new shows, up-close animal encounters and special surprises for guests.</li> <li>• In addition to theme park expansions, Orlando is adding family-friendly entertainment complexes, including I-Drive Live – complete with a 425-foot tall observation wheel and Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum – as well as The Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts located in downtown Orlando.</li> <li>• Two brand-new hotels will add 2,234 rooms: Cabana Bay Beach Resort at Universal Orlando Resort and Four Seasons Hotel at Walt Disney World Resort. For more information on new openings in 2014, visit <a href="http://media.visitorlando.com/press-kits">media.visitorlando.com/press-kits</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	At the approximate geographic centre of the state of Florida in the U.S.A., the three-county Orlando area consists of 2,856 square miles making it the approximate size of Austin, Texas or Stockholm, Sweden. Orlando is situated approximately 240 kms from the Florida/Georgia border to the north, 80 kms from the Atlantic Coast to the east, 120 kms from the Gulf Coast to the west, and 600 kms from the Florida Keys at the southern tip of the state.
<b>Geography</b>	The region Orlando occupies is generally low-lying, the only exception being minor sand hills formed by wave action in earlier geological eras when sea level was higher. Orlando is rivaled only by the Twin Cities in the number of natural lakes to be found in its metropolitan area. The Orlando area is home to more than <b>100 lakes</b> .
<b>Name</b>	The real namesake was a man named <b>Orlando Rees</b> , who operated a sugar mill and plantation about thirty miles north of the modern city; An alternative explanation for the name is that one of the founders of the city was enamored with Shakespeare, and named the city for the hero of As You Like It. Rosalind Avenue runs through downtown, as Rosalind ran through Orlando's heart.
<b>Population</b>	The population of Metro Orlando is approximately <b>1.8 million</b> . Metro Orlando consists of Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Lake counties. The population of Orange County is approximately 1 million.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Currency</b>	US Dollars; the current exchange rate at October 2013 is 0.96 US Dollars to the Canadian Dollar. This parity of the dollars makes Orlando even better value right now.

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<b>Tipping</b>	The custom of tipping is a common practice in Orlando: 15% to 20% for waiters; 10% to 15% for taxi drivers; \$1 per bag for bellmen. Occasionally gratuities are automatically added to restaurant checks, but not usually.
<b>Dress</b>	Clothing styles in Orlando are as varied as any other major city in the world. Styles of dress ranging from comfortable and casual to elegant and stylish will be seen in all parts of the city. Air conditioning is a way of life during Florida summers, making all clothing comfortable indoors.
<b>Documentation</b>	Passports are required for all Canadian visitors arriving by air or land.
<b>Time zone</b>	Eastern Standard Time, same as Toronto and Montreal.
<b>Health</b>	Excellent services available but ensure that you have travelers health insurance as health costs in the US can be very high
<b>Safety tips</b>	Orlando is relatively safe for the tourist. One should use the same precautions as when traveling anywhere - try not to travel alone and avoid deserted areas at night.

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	Orlando has a warm and humid subtropical climate, and there are two major seasons each year. One of those seasons is hot and rainy, lasting from April until October (roughly coinciding with the Atlantic hurricane season). The other is a cooler season (November through March) that brings more moderate temperatures and less frequent rainfall. October - May Average Daily Temperatures Days - 22 C to 27 C Nights - 16 C to 20 C  June - September Average Daily Temperatures Days - Upper 27 C to 32 C Nights - 20 C to 25 C
<b>Today's weather</b>	26 degrees Centigrade and sunny all day( 26 October 2013)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	Certain periods of the year are busier than others in terms of visitation to Orlando. The December holiday season as well as the traditional spring break vacation period (March and April, especially around Easter weekend) and summer vacation periods acquire the highest visitation numbers. In addition, various conventions and trade shows come to Orlando each year and may limit hotel space. The best travel times are February or September-November.

<b>GETTING THERE</b>	<b>Celebrate Family Day in Orlando - February 17<sup>th</sup> 2014</b> As one of the top family destinations, Orlando is the perfect place to getaway for the long Family Day holiday weekend. A trip to Orlando is convenient as major airlines and tour operators offer direct flights getting families to the destination in under three hours. A family getaway to Orlando is also affordable as many partners are
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	<p>offering package deals (VisitOrlando.ca will feature specific deals later this year) and Deals Made for Canadians are valid for travel over the holiday weekend.</p>
<b>Flying</b>	<p>Flight time to Orlando from Toronto is around <b>2 hours 40 minutes</b>. Book your trip with <b>Air Canada Vacations</b> who offer packages to Orlando or flexible combinations of flights, hotel, car rental and activities.</p> <p><a href="http://www.aircanadavacations.com">www.aircanadavacations.com</a> Tel: 1-866-529-2079</p>
<b>Airport</b>	<p>For two consecutive years, Orlando International Airport was named by the International Air Transport Association survey as the number one airport in North America and number one in the world for overall passenger satisfaction for airports serving more than 30 million passengers annually.</p>
<b>Orlando Neighbourhoods</b>	<p>Beyond the hustle &amp; bustle of the theme parks, visitors looking to dig a little deeper will find an Orlando filled with quaint neighbourhoods brimming with culture, history and culinary gems.</p> <p><b>Downtown Orlando</b> - With a mix of high rises and Victorian architecture, downtown anchors a "Cultural Corridor" that stretches for blocks with theatres, galleries, performing arts venues, and antique shops. The centrepiece is Lake Eola, a 43-acre park with generous sidewalks, lakeside cafes, wine bars, swan paddle boats for rent, and an intimate outdoor amphitheatre for concerts and special events.</p> <p><b>Winter Park</b> - Just North of downtown, this European-style community dates back to the 1880's, when wealthy New Yorkers took the train as far south as it would go, and charms with tree-shaded avenues, cobblestone streets, and 10 blocks of cafes and boutiques (considered Central Florida's signature shopping street) anchored on one end by the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art and on the other end by the Rollins College Campus.</p> <p><b>Thornton Park</b> - Within walking distance of Lake Eola, this is Orlando's centre of new urbanism featuring residential lofts and condos, renovated cottages and historic homes (with architecture ranging from Craftsman-style bungalows to Neoclassical and Tudor Revival homes), and a diverse collection of shops, cafes and restaurants.</p> <p><b>Orlando's Vi-Mi (Vietnamese) District</b> - A thriving part of town centred at the intersection of Mills Avenue and Colonial Drive, the neighbourhood has become a Central Florida landmark and includes: Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese and Korean restaurants, groceries and merchants.</p>

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<b>Distances</b>	<b>Cocoa Beach</b> via the 528 Beeline Expressway is approximately 1 hour from the Orlando attractions area.
<b>Trolleys</b>	<b>I-Ride Trolleys</b> are the fun way to get around International Drive. Symbolizing its role as a true destination, the International Drive Resort Area offers its guests a certain amenity with all the bells and whistles: the exclusive, convenient, and economical I-RIDE Trolley Service. Single fare is just .75. Kids under age 12 ride free. Just hop on board an I-RIDE Trolley. Hours 8 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. daily.
<b>Trains</b>	<b>Amtrak</b> serves Orlando with two daily trains originating from New York and Miami with stops in downtown Orlando, Winter Park, Sanford and Kissimmee, as well as with a tri-weekly train originating from Los Angeles. Amtrak also offers its popular Auto Train, which transports passengers and their vehicles and features the comfort of bi-level Superliner sleepers, a diner and a lounge. The Auto Train runs daily between Lorton, Va., and Sanford, leaving each town at 4 p.m. and arriving at the destination at 8:30 a.m. the next morning.
<b>Car Rental</b>	Car rental is easy at the airport and downtown locations with all major companies represented. Because of the competition for customers, the car rental rates are among the lowest in the world. Those who rent a car while in Orlando will find excellent signage that makes it easy to navigate throughout the area as well as friendly rental agents who will provide detailed maps that will guide you to your destination. Major highway networks provide easy access for visitors to reach their destination and for traveling in and around the Greater Orlando area. Major highways include Interstate 4, the Florida Turnpike, Highway 528 (Bee Line Expressway), Highway 408 (East-West Expressway) and Highway 417 (Central Florida Greenway).
<b>Buses and More</b>	Besides taxi and limousine service to anywhere in the Greater Orlando area, the city's <b>Lynx bus system</b> provides economical public transportation around Orlando. Bus stops are marked with a 'paw' print of a Lynx cat. The downtown Orlando Lymmo bus system provides free transit reaching from the T.D. Waterhouse Centre to City Hall. The 11 Lymmo stations are designated by kiosks and the eight Lymmo stops are indicated by a small sign. Returning to the horse-and-buggy days, carriage rides are also available through local vendors in downtown Orlando.
<b>Special Offers</b>	The Orlando CVB offers the <b>Orlando Preferred Visitor Magicard</b> , a year-round money-saving discount card that allows visitors to save up to \$500. The card is valid at a large number of area establishments including attractions, accommodations, restaurants, dinner theatres, ground transportation, golf courses, shopping malls, eco-tourism and cultural arts. Visitors can conveniently download the card at <a href="http://www.orlandoinfo.com/magicard">www.orlandoinfo.com/magicard</a> .

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<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	The greater Orlando area contains approximately 450 hotels and <b>112,000 hotel guestrooms</b> . There are also more than 26,000 vacation home rentals available and more than 16,000 vacation ownership units. Even better news: hotel rates are lower than at any time in the last ten years!
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<b>LIFESTYLE GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	<p>This is THE Kid's Destination on Planet Earth! Nowhere else in the world will you find seven incredible theme parks, three water parks, and more than 80 other attractions offering astronauts to zoos and everything in between. You would need to stay for 67 days just to experience all of Orlando's attractions!</p> <p><b>LEGOLAND Florida</b> – Recently opened in 2011 with more than 50 rides, shows and attractions, including spectacular LEGO models, kids can let their imaginations run wild at lands like Castle Hill and LEGO City. Travel back to medieval times in Castle Hill where kids can ride LEGO-themed horses through a number of enchanted scenes or ride The Dragon, a coaster that takes you behind the scenes of the LEGOLAND Castle. In LEGO City, kids can live out their dreams in a scaled-down town where they can even get "real-life" driving experience.  <a href="http://www.florida.legoland.com">www.florida.legoland.com</a> ; 877-350-5346</p> <p>The <b>Grande Lakes Adventure Course</b> is a multi-level structure consisting of poles, cables and platforms with 25 traversing and climbing elements designed to allow every guest to choose their personal level of challenge. The course takes about three hours to complete and is held in three sessions: morning, noon and afternoon. Guests are provided with water, sun screen and equipment. Cost is \$45 for children ages 10-16 and \$65 for adults. The course is open on Saturdays and Sundays. Children must be at least 10 years old to participate. <a href="http://www.grandelakesoutfitters.com">www.grandelakesoutfitters.com</a> ; 407-393-4007</p>
<b>Teens</b>	<p>A concert at <b>House of Blues</b> or <b>Hard Rock Live</b> could be just the ticket to keep teens happy during their visit. And dinner at Race Rock Supercharged Restaurant, NASCAR Café at Universal Studios CityWalk, Sharks Underwater Grill inside SeaWorld Orlando, Planet Hollywood or Rainforest Café is a treat they won't forget.</p> <p>The <b>Kennedy Space Center</b> is approximately an hour's drive east of Orlando, easily accessible via Toll Road 528. Although there is no public transportation available from Orlando, there are several private shuttle companies that provide transportation to and from Kennedy Space Center.</p>

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	<p>There are no less than <b>five major water parks</b> in the area:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adventure Island 813-987-5660 <a href="http://www.adventureisland.com">www.adventureisland.com</a> 10001 Malcolm McKinley Drive Tampa, FL 33612</li> <li>-Aquatica - SeaWorld's Water Park NEW! 407-363-2280 <a href="http://www.seaworldaquatica.com">www.seaworldaquatica.com</a> 10303 International Drive Orlando, FL 32821</li> <li>-Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park 407-824-4321 <a href="http://www.disneyworld.com">www.disneyworld.com</a> Post Office Box 10,000 Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830-1000</li> <li>-Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park 407-824-4321 <a href="http://www.disneyworld.com">www.disneyworld.com</a> Post Office Box 10,000 Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830-1000</li> <li>-Wet 'n Wild - Orlando 407-351-1800 <a href="http://www.wetwildorlando.com">www.wetwildorlando.com</a> 6200 International Drive Orlando, FL 32819</li> </ul> <p>And how about a spot of <b>zip-lining</b>? Florida Eco-Safaris at Forever Florida features the first Zipline experience in the state. The Zipline Safari takes guests on a treetop nature tour reaching heights of 55 feet (16.8 meters) and speeds up to 32 kph. The Central Florida ZOOM Air Adventures and Grande Lakes Adventure Course also offer Ziplining opportunities. In summer 2011, Gatorland will open a new Eco Zip Line, carrying riders along 1,200 feet (366 meters) of high-flying adventure up to 56 feet (17 meters) high and near 48 kph.</p>
<p><b>Disabled Travellers</b></p>	<p>An Orlando vacation offers lots to explore for all members of your travel party. Guests with mobility disabilities will find our more than 500 hotels, 99 attractions and many recreational opportunities specially equipped to ensure their comfort and ease of access.</p> <p>Accommodations Hotels and motels are required by law to have special rooms equipped for wheelchairs, with hand rails and wider doorways. Please mention your special needs when making your reservations</p> <p><b>The Able Trust</b>, is a public-private partnership foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Through its Web site, you can find listings of additional service providers: <a href="http://www.abletrust.org/links/agency_listings_CF.shtml">http://www.abletrust.org/links/agency_listings_CF.shtml</a></p> <p>The Society for Accessible Travel &amp; Hospitality (SATH) provides information on traveling with a variety of special needs.</p>
<p><b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b></p>	<p>Known for years as a haven for honeymooners, Orlando has emerged as a premier wedding destination. From the simple to the elegant, from the intimate to the grandiose, Orlando provides a host of unforgettable wedding settings just right for the bride and groom's special day. While the area offers a bouquet of traditional wedding options, Orlando</p>

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	exceeds the extraordinary with a number of unique backdrops to say "I do." Among the stunning venues are the lush Harry P. Leu Gardens, the intimate Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens, the magical Cinderella's Castle at Disney's Magic Kingdom, the Rivership Romance river boat and the creative "Weddings at the Shack" at Orlando Harley-Davidson.
<b>Family Reunions</b>	For a reunion that's miles apart from last year's gathering in Aunt Edna's backyard, celebrate your special event at one of Orlando's spectacular theme parks. Walt Disney World Resort, Universal Orlando Resort, SeaWorld Orlando and Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex all offer discounted tickets for groups as well as special services such as catering, event and banquet space and assistance in event planning. Some parks even offer exclusive tours for groups. When it comes to planning your Orlando reunion, the possibilities are as limitless as your imagination.
<b>Seniors</b>	Mature travellers, snowbirds, seniors, grandparents and the young-at-heart - Orlando offers numerous discounts to help you make the most of your visit. Search the offers at <a href="http://www.orlandoinfo.com/seniors">http://www.orlandoinfo.com/seniors</a> for great deals on accommodations, attractions, cultural activities, dining and transportation.

<b>UNIQUES</b>	
<b>Surprising</b>	The world's most comprehensive collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany are on display year-round at <b>The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art</b> in Winter Park.
<b>History</b>	<p>During the <b>Second Seminole War</b>, the U.S. Army established an outpost at Fort Gatlin, a few miles south of the modern downtown, in 1838. But it was quickly abandoned when the war came to an end. Prior to being known as its current name, Orlando was known as Jernigan, after the first permanent settler, cattleman Aaron Jernigan, who acquired land along Lake Holden by the terms of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842. But most pioneers did not arrive until after the Third Seminole War in the 1850s. Most of the early residents made their living by cattle ranching.</p> <p>Orlando remained a rural backwater during the <b>American Civil War</b>, and suffered greatly during the Federal Blockade. The Reconstruction Era brought a population explosion, which led to the city's incorporation in 1875.</p> <p>The period from <b>1875 to 1895</b> is remembered as Orlando's "Gilded Era," when it became the hub of Florida's citrus industry. But a great freeze in 1894-1895 forced many owners to give up their independent groves, thus consolidating holdings in the hands of a few "citrus barons" which shifted operations south, primarily around Lake Wales in Polk County.</p>

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	<p>Perhaps the most critical event for Orlando's economy occurred in <b>1965</b> when <b>Walt Disney</b> announced plans to build Walt Disney World. Although Disney had considered the cities of Miami and Tampa for his park, one of the major reasons behind his decision not to locate in those cities was the threat of hurricanes. The famous vacation resort opened in October 1971, ushering in an explosive population and economic growth for the Orlando metropolitan area, which now encompasses Orange, Seminole, Osceola, and Lake counties. As a result, tourism became the centerpiece of the area's economy and Orlando is consistently ranked as one of the top vacation destinations in the world.</p>
<p><b>Books</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Frommer's Florida</b></li> <li>- <b>"Florida, eh?"</b> By Isobel Warren and Milan Chvostek</li> <li>- <b>"Places to go with children in Orlando and Central Florida"</b>, by Deborah Ann Johnson and Cheryl Lani Juarez</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Attractions 2013</b></p>	<p>Orlando is an exciting vacation destination that is ever changing and growing. From exhilarating attractions and gourmet restaurants to fashion-savvy boutiques and unexpected cultural venues, Central Florida is always introducing something new to entertain and amaze visitors.</p> <p>Here are some highlights of what is new and upcoming in Orlando...</p> <p><b>2013</b></p> <p><b>Attractions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SeaWorld Orlando opened <b>Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin</b> - the biggest expansion in its company history, on May 24. The all-new realm includes a state-of-the-art ride that takes guests on an exciting journey through the dangers and wondrous beauty of the Antarctic as they follow and mimic a young penguin's adventures. Guests will explore a penguin colony in an area that envelops them in cool extremes. At 30 degrees, Antarctica is the coldest theme park attraction in the world.</li> <li>• Universal Orlando Resort opened <b>TRANSFORMERS: The Ride – 3D</b> on June 20. The attraction combines larger-than-life Transformers characters and an exciting storyline with life-like HD CGI media, state-of-the-art 3-D technology and amazing special effects to place riders right in the middle of an epic battle between the Autobots and the Decepticons. The world's first Simpsons themed area, <b>Springfield</b>, officially opened August 2013 at Universal Studios Florida, featuring all-new restaurants and attractions, including Kang &amp; Kodos' Twirl 'n' Hurl.</li> <li>• Walt Disney World Resort continues its <b>New Fantasyland</b></li> </ul>

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expansion at Magic Kingdom Park. Opened on September 18, 2013, Princess Fairytale Hall will allow guests to meet Cinderella, Rapunzel and other Disney princesses in the Castle Courtyard located in the center of New Fantasyland. Throughout the resort, waiting in lines may be a thing of the past, when **MyMagic+** launches in fall 2013. MyMagic+ is a new website and app that will give guests, prior to leaving their homes, the opportunity to lock in seating for parades, fireworks and character interactions as well as FastPasses. Once in Orlando, guests can wear wristbands called MagicBands that will serve as room keys, tickets and FastPasses. Details have been announced about the new Avatar-inspired land, set to open in 2017. The expansion, set to be the largest in Animal Kingdom's history, will feature floating mountains, bioluminescent rainforests and a Banshee flying attraction, as well as new after-dark entertainment.

- Walt Disney World Resort announced a new expansion which will transform Downtown Disney into the new **Disney Springs**. Construction on the project began in April 2013 and will utilize the current waterfront and lakeside charm of the venue. The project will feature an eclectic and contemporary mix of styles, as well as double the amount of shopping, dining and entertainment experiences available.
- **Fun Spot America** opened a 10 acre (3.9 hectare) expansion on June 8. The expansion included a wide range of family-friendly go-kart tracks, rides and food options. Fun Spot added White Lightning, Central Florida's first a wooden roller coaster; Freedom Flyer, a suspended family coaster; and a 250-foot-tall (76-meter) SkyCoaster.
- Gatorland opened **Panther Springs**, a new 2,000-square-foot (185-square-meter) attraction housing the newest residents, Neiko and Lucy. Guests can observe the panthers up-close through a wall of glass on one side or, from a slight distance, through wire netting on one end.
- **Hard Knocks**, an indoor combat simulation arena and advanced gaming lounge, opened a location at Pointe Orlando on International Drive. The new location offers two combat arenas and floor-to-ceiling graphics and TV screens.
- Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex unveiled the 90,000-square-foot (8,362-square-meter) home for the **Space Shuttle Atlantis**, which retired in 2011. The \$100 million exhibit provides views of the vehicle up close, along with interactive features reflecting major accomplishments of the Space Shuttle Program, including the Hubble

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Space Telescope and the International Space Station. The complex also partnered with Rovio Entertainment to present Angry Birds Space Encounter, which opened in March. The 4,485-square-foot (416.67-square-meter) interactive attraction includes six stations designed to engage and immerse guests in a new dimension of Angry Birds Space.

- **KINGS Bowl** recently opened on International Drive. The boutique bowling venue features 22 lanes, a full-service, upscale restaurant, four full-sized billiards tables, a regulation-sized shuffleboard table, an outdoor bocce ball court, weekend disc jockeys and dancing.
- **LEGOLAND Florida** announced plans of adding new attractions and renovations to the toddler-dedicated area, DUPLO Valley, which is slated to reopen spring 2014. The additions will bring new farm-themed attractions to the area, including a train, mini tractor ride and a water play area, as well as enhancements to the existing DUPLO Barn. The World of Chima, an expansion based on the Cartoon Network animated TV series and new LEGO product line, is now open. The World of Chima follows animal warriors on magical journeys and centers around an interactive water ride, Quest for Chi.

#### **Accommodations**

- **The Alfond Inn** at Rollins College opened August 18. The roughly 100,000-square-foot (9,290-square-meter) facility features 112 guest rooms, 10,000 square feet (929 square meters) of ballroom and meeting space, a fitness center, rooftop pool, and series of courtyards.
- **Aloft Orlando Downtown**, a Starwood Hotels & Resorts brand, will open on October 17. The hotel will offer 118 guestrooms complete with refrigerators, LCD televisions, complimentary wireless Internet access and more. The hotel, in the heart of downtown Orlando, also offers 7,000-square-feet (630-square-meters) of flexible meeting space.
- **Avanti Resort**, a family-oriented leisure resort opened on International Drive. Decorated in a chic, avant-garde décor, Avanti offers a variety of room types, including double queen rooms and connecting suites all with open-air corridors.
- **B Hotels and Resorts** plans to expand the B portfolio to Walt Disney World's Downtown Disney resort area. Scheduled to open in late 2013, plans for the 394-room hotel in Lake Buena Vista include a complete renovation to make it a four-star property.

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- **Villas of Grand Cypress Golf Resort** completed a \$14 million renovation to their 146 rooms and added a new fitness centre.

- **Wyndham Orlando Resort** is completing a multi-million dollar renovation including, an estimated 25,000-square-foot (2,250-square-meter) addition and re-model of all guest rooms and lobby.

### Dining

- **East End Market**, opening October 25, 2013, will be located in Orlando's Audubon Park, just north of downtown. The market will include 10 local, independently owned food enterprises, including a butcher, seafood merchant, produce vendor and baker. Also included, will be Txokos Kitchen, a dine-in restaurant featuring farm-fresh lunch and dinner options.

- **Kasa Tapas and Raw Bar**, located in Downtown Orlando, will open on November 14 at 8 p.m. The new restaurant will feature a menu comprised of small plates with global influences and a raw bar with fresh oysters and seafood.

- **The Coop**, a southern-inspired, fast-casual concept by John Rivers, chef-owner of 4 Rivers Smokehouse, is slated to open March 2014. The restaurant, located in the heart of downtown Winter Park, will focus on comfort food classics made fresh with local ingredients.

- **Hash House A Go Go** opened on International Drive, this dining spot serving "twisted farm food" in massive portions. Hash House features fresh farm foods and old-fashioned recipes mixed with unique styling and flavors.

- **Hamilton's Kitchen**, a new restaurant and lounge at The Alford Inn, opened Aug. 18. Guests can experience the sights, sounds and aromas of food being prepared as they enter the early 1900's themed restaurant. The menu will feature farm-to-table dishes, freshly prepared with a modern culinary twist.

- **The Hyppo** opened on April 14 and features an ever-changing menu features gourmet popsicles that come in flavors like pineapple cilantro, Riesling pear and mango habanero.

- **La Strada Italian Kitchen** is located in Downtown Orlando. This casual restaurant is a quick-service gourmet concept that features authentic homemade fare.

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- **Nona Blue** opened in March and is owned by professional golfer Graeme McDowell. The modern tavern-style eatery features a unique blend of sports bar atmosphere and high-end private dining.
- **Orlando World Center Marriott** opened a new onsite restaurant, Siro Urban Italian Kitchen. This casual dining spot features a farm-to-fork philosophy and is open for early-evening light fare and dinner.
- **The Pharmacy** recently opened its doors in the Dellagio complex on Sand Lake Road. From the owners of The Table, this 1920s speak easy-themed bar and restaurant feature local, organic and sustainable fare in a casual dining atmosphere.
- **Sea Dog Brewing** opened in April and is a casual spot known for its creative pub fare, spacious dining area and relaxing open air porch. Sea Dog offers unique, handcrafted and award-winning English style beers like the Blueberry Wheat Ale made with wild Maine Blueberries or the Windjammer Blonde Ale.
- **Toasted** opened in February and offers specialty craft grilled cheese sandwiches. This casual Winter Park dining spot also offers burgers and fresh salads made from locally sourced ingredients and artisan bread.
- **Wolfie's Pizzamia** opened in February and is an artisanal pizzeria by the owners of the popular While Wolf Café. Serving house-made pasta, breads, dough, salami and most of their cheeses, they focus on sustainability and sourcing only local ingredients.

### Shopping

- **The Florida Mall** will debut new tenants to join more than 150 existing retailers, including Polaroid FOTOBAR, a unique retail concept that can take photos from customer's smartphones or other sources and transform them into custom art projects; apparel and accessories retailer, Original Penguin; SIX:02, a new concept from Footlocker for women; and The Art of Shaving.
- **The Mall at Millenia**, ranked among the world's top 10 most successful shopping centres by Shopping Centers Today, will open a new wave of internationally-recognized retailers including Prada, YSL and Swiss watchmakers Hublot, Omega and Breitling. The mall also introduced the new Capital Grille in April.

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- **Orlando Premium Outlets** - Vineland Ave added a 110,000-square-foot (9,900-square-meters) expansion called The Promenade, which opened October 3. The expansion includes 12 new stores, additional dining as well as an Information Center, and is anchored by Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th.

## 2014

### Attractions

- **I-Drive Live**, a new entertainment complex located on International Drive, is scheduled to begin opening segments in spring 2014. The project is centered by a 425-foot (129.54-meter) observation wheel, slated to open December 31, 2014. Other entertainment offerings include Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and Sea Life Aquarium. The project also includes a variety of dining and shopping such as Red Robin, Starbucks, Seafood Republic, Buffalo Wild Wings and Walgreens.
- **I-Drive Indoor Kart Racing** is scheduled to open January 2014. The attraction, located off International, includes a multi-level entertainment center equipped a half-mile (.8-kilometer) long go-kart track; 10,500-square-foot (.95-square-meter) second floor with bowling lanes; an arcade area; and a food and beverage area.
- Walt Disney World Resort's Magic Kingdom continues its New Fantasyland expansion with the **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train Coaster**. Magic Kingdom will also welcome its newest day-time parade, Disney Festival of Fantasy, in 2014. The parade will include popular characters from stories like "The Little Mermaid," "Sleeping Beauty," "Dumbo," "Pinocchio," "Peter Pan," "Tangled" and Disney-Pixar's "Brave." Animal Kingdom will also begin construction on its AVATAR themed-land expansion.
- Universal Orlando Resort is expanding The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Expected to open in 2014, the expansion will feature **Diagon Alley**, located at Universal Studios Florida, and will feature new shops, restaurants and an interactive ride based on Gringotts Bank. The Hogwarts Express will provide transportation between Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade located at Islands of Adventure.
- SeaWorld Orlando will launch its 50th anniversary celebration March 21, 2014. The 18-month campaign, dubbed "**A Sea of Surprises**," will include animal ambassadors" located throughout the

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	<p>park giving visitors surprise encounters with animals; "Surprise Squads" giving away prizes such as free souvenirs or behind-the-scenes experiences; and "spontaneous entertainment" popping up at unexpected moments along park pathways.</p> <p><b>Accommodations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Four Seasons Hotel at the Walt Disney World Resort</b>, anticipated to open mid-2014, will have 444 rooms, a championship golf course, spa, adults-only pool, kids activity center, rooftop steakhouse, and more.</li> <li>• <b>Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort</b> is scheduled to open in 2014 and will be the largest of Universal's four onsite hotels with 1,800 rooms.</li> </ul> <p><b>Dining</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mango's Tropical Café</b> is slated to open late 2014 on International Drive. Straight from Miami's South Beach, the restaurant features live bands, extravagant cabaret-style performances and family-friendly "Dinner &amp; Show" events nightly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Arts &amp; Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts</b> broke ground in June 2011 with anticipated completion in 2014.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Must Sees</b></p>	<p><b>International Heli-Tours</b> opened on International Drive. The helicopter touring company offers aerial tours of Orlando, Kissimmee, Walt Disney World Resort, Universal Orlando Resort and more; showcasing the city's attractions, lakes and abundant wildlife. Specialty tours include celebrity house sightings, theme park sightings, resort sightings, fireworks viewing and alligator searches. Tours start at \$25.  <a href="http://www.internationalhelitours.com">www.internationalhelitours.com</a> ; 407-239-8687</p> <p><b>WonderWorks</b> unveiled a new exhibit to challenge visitors' minds. "Mindball" is a table top game that goes against the conventional competitive concept and relies on calmness to measure a participant's success. The goal is for participants to be more relaxed than their opponents in order to move a ball away from your opponent's goal. Players and audience can follow the mental process during the game as players' brain wave activity is presented graphically on a 52-inch (1.3-meter) monitor.  <a href="http://www.wonderworksonline.com">www.wonderworksonline.com</a> ;</p> <p><b>SeaWorld Orlando:</b> SeaWorld Orlando has <b>Manta</b>, a roller coaster attraction that transitions riders from air to sea in the summer. Guests</p>

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will experience underwater animal habitats, soar face-down in a horizontal position to nearly 60 mph, and come within inches of the “ocean.” Visitors can choose not to ride and instead experience the attraction itself, which provides floor-to-ceiling window views of more than 300 rays, including shark rays, spotted eagle rays and leopard rays.

[www.SeaWorld.com](http://www.SeaWorld.com)

**Universal Orlando Resort** has an amazing roller coaster, **Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit**. The high-tech, multi-sensory experience includes audio and special effects with on-and-off-board LED-screen videos to create a unique experience that allows riders to choose which song they will hear while they are on the roller coaster and take home a music video when the ride is over.

[www.universalorlando.com](http://www.universalorlando.com)

### **Walt Disney World Resort**

**Characters in Flight**, an iconic attraction in the form of a giant tethered helium balloon, opened at Downtown Disney. The 72-foot-diameter (23-meter) balloon, developed by Aerophile, holds up to 30 guests and lifts them 400 feet (122 meters) into the air to experience a 360-degree view of the Walt Disney World Resort. The six-minute flight is \$16 for adults and \$10 for children ages 3 – 9. The experience is open weather permitting. [disneyworld.com](http://disneyworld.com)

**Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure** at Epcot. The high-tech interactive adventure allows guests to team-up with members of Team Possible in Epcot’s Mexico, Norway, China, Germany, Japan, France and United Kingdom pavilions to save the world from villains and their mad inventions.

[www.disneyworld.com](http://www.disneyworld.com)

**Move It, Shake It, Celebrate It! Street Party** at Magic Kingdom. The 15-minute party takes place three times a day on Main Street, U.S.A. Guests can see stilt walkers and other performers move to the beat of high-energy tunes while floats are decked-out as gift-wrapped packages with Disney characters popping out of the boxes.

[www.disneyworld.com](http://www.disneyworld.com)

### **SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

Sport lovers will enjoy the 176 golf courses, 800 tennis courts and 2,000 lakes for swimming, fishing, boating and water skiing.

Orlando is also home to the **Orlando Magic**, an NBA pro basketball franchise that plays at the TD Waterhouse Centre in downtown Orlando.

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<p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>MLB's must see pre-season action includes: <b>spring training</b> with the Atlanta Braves at Disney's Wide World of Sports, the Houston Astros at the Osceola County Stadium, the Detroit Lions in Lakeland and the Washington Nationals at the Space Coast Stadium in Brevard County. Nearby, the <b>Tampa Bay Rays</b> play regular season major league baseball.</p>
<p><b>Golf</b></p>	<p>A golf getaway can mean different things to different people: a group of hard-core golfers may focus on a competitive program; a couple on a romantic getaway may desire just a touch of golf on the side; a family requires more instruction and flexibility; and a group of friends may just want the opportunity to see their idols up close.</p> <p>With <b>176 golf courses</b> and golf resorts, 23 golf academies, some of the world's most prestigious tournaments, top-rated professional players and course architects, and even the world's top golf shops, Orlando is one of the few places in the world that can confidently meet the needs of any type of traveling golf group. In fact, Orlando was voted "<b>North American Golf Destination of the Year 2010</b>" by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO).</p> <p><b>Tough Competitions</b> Well-known for its theme parks, Orlando is also renowned on the golf circuit. Orlando hosts more professional tour competitions than any other city. PGA Tour stars – Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and many others – compete every March in the Arnold Palmer Invitational Presented by MasterCard at the Bay Hill Club &amp; Lodge, and the top professional players return in the fall as the tour visits Walt Disney World for the Children's Miracle Network Classic. Orlando was also home to the LPGA Tour Championship in 2010 when it was held at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress in December.</p> <p><b>Golfing in Their Own Backyard</b> With so many pro golf tournaments, it's no surprise that Orlando is also home to more pro tour players than any city in the world. Tiger Woods, Arnold Palmer, Chris DiMarco, Zach Johnson, Ernie Els, Sergio Garcia, Retief Goosen, Annika Sorenstam, Se Ri Pak and Mark O'Meara and many others hang their hats in the Orlando area.</p> <p><b>Learning from the Best</b> Looking for high-profile instruction? Look no further than Orlando, which boasts 23 golf academies and places two resident teachers on Golf Digest's Top 50 Instructors list, two on Golf Digest's Top 50 Best Women Instructors list and eight on Golf Magazine's Top 100. They include two top 10 teachers, David Leadbetter at ChampionsGate (No. 3) and Mike Bender at Timacuan Golf Club in Lake Mary (No. 9).</p>

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### **Golf Resorts**

Many traveling golfers prefer the all-inclusive, self-contained resort experience and some of the world's best are situated in Orlando.

**Waldorf Astoria Golf Club** – This Rees Jones-designed 18-hole golf course uses the land's natural contours as a canvas and is conveniently located in the Disney World Resort. The classic layout of this challenging golf resort blends a traditional character with countless subtleties.

**Grand Cypress Resort** offers grand choices: 45 holes of outstanding Jack Nicklaus-designed golf and either villas or hotel rooms for accommodations. It has hosted the LPGA Tournament of Champions and the World Cup. One of its courses, "The New Course," is a replica of the famed Old Course in St. Andrews.

**Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Resort** offers 70 guest rooms and one of the best-known golf layouts in the world, designed by the golf legend himself.

**Mystic Dunes Resort & Golf Club** features the most unique layout in Central Florida, designed by Champions Tour player and NBC golf commentator Gary Koch, along with well-appointed and comfortable fairway villas.

**Champions Gate and Reunion Resort and Club**, Wyndham Grand Resort are neighbors on the south side of Orlando, and both offer multiple golf courses and great hotels. Reunion features three championship courses by Tom Watson, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. The Watson and Palmer designs were listed on Golfweek's "America's Top 40 New Courses for 2005." The Nicklaus-designed Tradition course opened to rave reviews in 2006. The 730-room Omni Orlando Resort at Champions Gate features two Greg Norman-designed courses—the links-style International and the traditional Florida-style National layout.

**The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando**, Grande Lakes, is nestled between a pristine nature reserve and a vast luxury resort complex that encompasses the 1,000-room JW Marriott Orlando, Grande Lakes, and the 584-room The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes. The Greg Norman-designed course features a Caddie Concierge program that provides a knowledgeable professional attendant who offers course strategy and history, places food and beverage orders and even makes dinner reservations for after the round.

The David Harman-designed **Shingle Creek Golf Club** at Rosen Shingle Creek located just east of Orlando's Orange County Convention Center, was among Golfweek's "Top 40 New Courses for 2005." The course serves as the centerpiece of the 93-hectare resort.

**Orange Lake Resort** features vacation villas and 36 holes of great golf,

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	<p>including one Palmer design that recently underwent renovation. And, Mission Inn Resort is one of the region's favorites, with two great courses in a tranquil setting.</p> <p><b>Casual Games</b> For visitors looking to enjoy Orlando's famous theme parks along with a round or two of golf, Walt Disney World Resort awaits with four championship-caliber courses spaced over 314 hectares of the 122-square-kilometer property. In addition to scenic course landscapes, Disney's golf program offers a variety of instructional clinics, training opportunities and well-equipped pro shops, including leading-edge rental clubs.</p> <p><b>Golf Trail</b> A new Orlando "Golf Trail" (<a href="http://www.orlandogolftrail.com">www.orlandogolftrail.com</a>) links nine premier golf facilities and six lodging properties along the Interstate 4 corridor, offering golfers a convenient, one-stop booking option for a golf vacation like no other.</p>
<b>Fishing</b>	<p>Anglers discover a sea of choices when it comes to fishing the more than <b>2,000 named lakes, rivers and springs</b> in the greater Orlando area. Large-mouth bass, monster red fish and spotted sea trout are just a few of the creatures waiting to take the bait. BASS Online, Pro Bass Guide Service and Incentive Fishing Charters are among the area's numerous professional fish camps and guide services. Grande Lakes Outfitters offers an Orvis-endorsed private fly fishing school, full-day fly fishing seminars, fly fishing tours with professional guides and private guided eco-tours on Shingle Creek. Fans of saltwater fishing can cast their lines from piers, from the shore or from deep-sea fishing boats in the East Coast waters located less than an hour from Orlando, or in the West Coast waterways, only two hours away.</p>
<b>Adventure Activities</b>	<p>Orlando is a virtual endless summer of outdoor fun - in the water, on land or in the air. With more than 2,000 lakes, springs and rivers, Orlando offers unlimited boating, canoeing, tubing, jet-skiing and water-skiing opportunities. Numerous eco-tours offer an insider's look at natural Florida, from cruises through the headwaters of the Everglades to bird- and gator-spotting excursions. For more adrenaline-pumping activities, visitors can get behind the wheel of a 600-horse-power Nextel Cup race car at the Richard Petty Driving Experience, skydive indoors at SkyVenture Orlando, enjoy a breathtaking sunrise hot air balloon ride, or hang glide at Wallaby Ranch Hang Gliding Flight Park, the first year-round hang gliding flight park in the world. Adventure enthusiasts can also get up-close and personal with the sea's perfect predators during a Sharks Deep Dive Experience at SeaWorld Orlando.</p>

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<p><b>Hiking</b></p>	<p>There are 21 fitness trails for biking, walking or blading. For the more energetic, Disney hold a number of running events through their parks: I have run their Wine and Dine Disney Half Marathon in October which is great fun – see my Travel Blog at <a href="http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2010_10_01_archive.html">http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2010_10_01_archive.html</a></p>
<p><b>Cycling</b></p>	<p>You can tour Orlando by bike: the <b>West Orange Trail</b> provides 30.5 kilometers of paved trails for biking, in-line skating or walking near beautiful Lake Apopka. Rental skates and bikes are available through West Orange Trail Bikes &amp; Blades Co.</p> <p>Designated a <b>Bicycle Friendly Community</b> by the League of American Bicyclists, Orlando offers a multitude of paved fitness trails for people who want to put more fun in their exercise program by biking, in-line skating or walking. Many paths surround scenic lakes or are located in recreational parks. A number of shops offer equipment rentals. The West Orange Trail provides 31 paved kms with restroom and picnic facilities.</p> <p>Those looking to discover a new way to see the sights will be intrigued by the <b>Segway tours</b> at Epcot at Walt Disney World Resort offered before the park opens to the general public.</p>
<p><b>Horseback Riding</b></p>	<p>If you've always had a hankering for the Wild West, try horseback riding through <b>Westgate River Ranch's</b> 688 hectares of protected wildlife reserve. Westgate offers an authentic ranch experience with Western-style lodging, nature hikes, fishing, boating, trap and skeet shooting, line dancing at its very own saloon and even a weekly cowboy rodeo.</p>
<p><b>Up In The Air</b></p>	<p>While Orlando may be best known for its world-class attractions, it is also filled with unique adventures that make vacations unforgettable. Where else can adventurous travelers try their hand at hang gliding or skydiving with no prior training or feel the wind in their hair in an open-cockpit 1930s biplane?</p> <p><b>Hot Air Balloon Rides</b> – Visitors looking for an over-the-top experience should check out a hot air balloon ride – at sunrise, no less – with one of the area's established vendors such as Bob's Balloon Flights, Orlando Balloon Rides or Magic Sunrise Ballooning. After boarding, visitors are carried away by warm breezes and breathtaking views that only a hot air balloon ride can provide. Once back on land, many companies offer a champagne toast, celebration picnic and commemorative photos with the pilot.</p> <p><b>Helicopter Rides</b> – For a truly unique view of Orlando's famed attractions, visitors can board an air-conditioned helicopter. Several</p>

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	<p>companies including International Heli-Tours provide narrated tours, offering insight into the area and fantastic opportunities for photos and videos.</p> <p><b>Skydiving</b> –Visitors seeking the ultimate thrill can do so with the help of area skydiving schools that have visitors airborne in just one day. Not quite ready to take the plunge? Consider a company like iFly Orlando on International Drive, which offers an exhilarating indoor experience through a super-charged wind tunnel.</p> <p><b>Hang Gliding</b> – Wallaby Ranch Hang Gliding Flight Park has visitors airborne within moments of their arrival on a tandem hang glider. Towed to a height of 610 meters by a specially designed ultra light tow plane, they will enjoy the view of unspoiled landscape as they glide back down to solid ground.</p> <p><b>Historical Flight</b> – Aircraft aficionados can step back in time on board a vintage biplane or fighter plane flight over Central Florida. Fantasy of Flight in nearby Polk City, offers open-cockpit biplane rides in a 1930s New Standard D-25 or a 1940s Boeing PT-17 Stearman. Biplane Rides Over Kissimmee also offers biplane rides in a 1940s PT-17 Stearman, while Warbird Adventures provides flights on the World War II T-6 Texan fighter plane.</p>
<p><b>Underwater</b></p>	<p><b>Fun 2 Dive Scuba and Manatee Snorkeling Tours</b> offers full-day manatee snorkeling experiences which include a manatee awareness program and time in the water with these gentle creatures. Florida Dolphin Tours, Inc. also offers sightseeing tours and excursions to see or swim with dolphins and manatees up close.</p>
<p><b>Soft Adventure</b></p>	<p><b>Daytona International Speedway</b>, home of the Daytona 500 and Coke Zero 400 NASCAR races, offers exciting racing; guided Speedway tours; and the Richard Petty Driving Experience.  <a href="http://www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com">www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com</a> 386-253-7223</p> <p><b>Indy Racing Experience</b>, located at the Walt Disney World Speedway, gives race fans and thrill seekers the opportunity to drive and ride in actual cars that were used in past Indianapolis 500 events. After suiting up in authentic driver fire suits and being strapped in by a pit crew, guests can feel the speed, g-forces and pressure of true IndyCar racing. Drivers and riders must be 18 years of age or older.  <a href="http://www.indyracingexperience.com">www.indyracingexperience.com</a> 888-357-5002/317-243-7171</p> <p><b>Revolution The Off-Road Experience</b> in Clermont lets visitors take the wheel of an all-terrain vehicle, Hummer, Jeep Dune Buggy or high-speed rally car for a few hours of off-road fun. Or, guests can take</p>

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	<p>to the water for wakeboarding, waterskiing or fishing.  <a href="http://www.revolutionoffroad.com">www.revolutionoffroad.com</a> 352-400-1322</p> <p><b>Richard Petty Driving Experience</b> takes motorsports fans out of the grandstands and puts them behind the wheel of a stock car. Ride-and-drive programs on the 1.6-kilometer, tri-oval Walt Disney World Speedway and 4-kilometer Daytona International Speedway are available. Drivers must be 18 years of age and riders must be at least 14 years of age.  <a href="http://www.1800bepetty.com">www.1800bepetty.com</a> 800-237-3889/407-939-0130</p> <p>Zero-G Corporation provides a full-day experience featuring a <b>weightless flight</b> that only astronauts have had access to prior to now. Flights depart from the Kennedy Space Center.  <a href="http://www.gozerog.com">www.gozerog.com</a> 800-ZERO-G-800/954-756-1000</p>
<p><b>Spas</b></p>	<p>Whether your goal is pure relaxation, fitness, health or all of the above, a visit to one of Orlando's <b>19 full-service destination spas</b> surely will soothe away all cares of the world.</p> <p>Orlando's largest spa is the 39,999-square-foot <b>The Ritz-Carlton Spa</b>, Grande Lakes Orlando. In addition to 40 treatment rooms, a few of which are equipped for couple's massages, the spa offers a full-service salon, spa boutique and signature citrus-infused treatments.</p> <p>Orlando's newest retreat, <b>Spa by Guerlain at the Waldorf Astoria</b> Orlando is a luxurious spa that includes 23 indoor and six outdoor treatment areas. Here, you can enjoy transforming body therapies and soothing massages to enhance overall well-being. And The Spa at Hilton Orlando celebrates the zest of Florida with Neroli based products, treatments and services.</p> <p><b>The Mandara Spa</b> at the Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, a relaxation center at Universal Orlando Resort, offers an exotic spa experience rooted in Balinese healing traditions passed from generation to generation. The Mandara Spa at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel is an ancient Asian-inspired retreat featuring 13 treatment rooms, meditation gardens and a sophisticated hair and nail salon.</p> <p>At the <b>Spa at Buena Vista Palace</b> in the Walt Disney World Resort, you'll enjoy unique treatments such as the Theme Park Leg Relief Wrap, The Golden Door Pineapple Body Scrub or the Fountain of Youth Facial.</p> <p><b>The Spa at Orlando World Center Marriott Resort</b> offers the Around the World in Eighty Minutes signature massage experience featuring techniques from around the globe, a hydrating Après Soleil After-Sun Treatment and the World of Beauty Signature facial.</p> <p><b>The Spa at Rosen Shingle Creek</b> harnesses the essence of Florida in</p>

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	a menu of spa services that include citrus and cedar-infused massages and body treatments.
<b>CULTURE</b>	A new Web site, <a href="http://www.redchairproject.com">www.redchairproject.com</a> , offers a one-stop online source for the region's best arts and culture experiences and packages, including arts and culture events; dining and hotel accommodations. Visitors can also get a taste for the arts through the new Loch Haven Pass, which includes admission to the Orlando Science Center, Orlando Museum of Art and the Mennello Museum of American Art for 20 percent off of the regular adult and children admission prices. In addition, American Coach offers a discounted round-trip transportation ticket from International Drive to Loch Haven Park with the purchase of the Loch Haven Cultural Pass.
<b>Theatre</b>	The Orlando Metropolitan Area is home to a substantial theatre population, as well. Several professional and semi-professional houses and many community theatres dot the area including <b>Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival, Orlando Repertory Theatre, Mad Cow Theatre, Theatre Downtown, The Osceola Center for the Arts, Winter Park Playhouse, Theatre Winter Haven, and Seaside Music Theatre</b> . In addition, the <b>Bob Carr Performing Arts Center</b> brings national tours through town on a regular basis. Each spring, local theatres and downtown venues play host to the Orlando International Fringe Festival
<b>Arts</b>	<b>Orlando Museum of Art:</b> Permanent collections of American, African and ancient American art, as well as prestigious touring exhibitions in a picturesque park setting. Family discovery centers, Museum shop and free parking. Open Tues.-Sat. 10 am-4 pm, Sun. Noon-4 pm.
<b>Music</b>	The Orlando Opera, Orlando Ballet, Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival, Bach Festival Society, The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra...just some of the wonderful musical options available to visitors in the Orlando area.
<b>Films</b>	The wide variety of landscapes available across the Orlando area has provided the backdrop for some notable movies, commercials, television shows and music videos. Ace Ventura 3, Bring It On: 4, Monster, Larry The Cable Guy: Health Inspector and The Waterboy are among the many feature films shot in Orlando.
<b>Museums</b>	Marvel at Tiffany glass at The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art. <b>Orlando Science Center</b> offers an observatory, giant screen theater and hundreds of hands-on exhibits on four floors which offer opportunities to explore, experiment and discover. <a href="http://www.osc.org">www.osc.org</a> 888-672-4386/407-514-2000 <b>The Orange County Regional History Center</b> , housed in a restored

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	<p>historic five-story 1927 county courthouse in downtown Orlando. It showcases the collection of the Historical Society of Central Florida. The museum, a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Association of Museums, features three floors of permanent exhibitions and also presents nationally important limited-run exhibitions.</p> <p><a href="http://www.thehistorycenter.org">www.thehistorycenter.org</a></p>
<p><b>Festivals 2014</b></p>	<p>Below is a sampling of Orlando events for the first half of 2014, for full event listings visit <a href="http://www.visitorlando.com/events">www.visitorlando.com/events</a> .</p> <p><b>Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend</b> Jan. 8-12 Thousands of participants are expected for the annual event that charts a course through Magic Kingdom Park, Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park, Disney’s Hollywood Studios and Epcot. The two races are the climax of a whole weekend of fitness fun that also features Disney’s Health &amp; Fitness Expo in The Milk House at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. <a href="http://www.disneyworldsports.com">www.disneyworldsports.com</a></p> <p><b>A Celebration of Harry Potter</b> Jan. 24-26 The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal’s Islands of Adventure is gearing up for a celebration of films, complete with Q&amp;A sessions with cast members and filmmakers, a wand masterclass hosted by Warner Bros. Studio Tour London, a Harry Potter film tribute, and more. <a href="http://www.universalorlando.com">www.universalorlando.com</a></p> <p><b>Bands, Brew &amp; BBQ!</b> Feb. 1 – Mar. 9, Saturdays and Sundays SeaWorld Orlando is pairing some of the biggest names in country and classic rock with smokin’ barbecue and ice-cold Budweiser. <a href="http://www.seaworldorlando.com">www.seaworldorlando.com</a></p> <p><b>6th Annual Downtown Food and Wine Fest</b> Feb. 22-23 This annual fest features unique cuisine from 40 premiere Orlando restaurants. Guests can pair their spreads with international and domestic wines, as well as live music. <a href="http://www.downtownfoodandwinefest.com">www.downtownfoodandwinefest.com</a></p> <p><b>Mardi Gras at Universal Studios Florida</b> Select Days, Feb. – Apr. The streets of Universal Studios Florida turn into the largest Mardi Gras celebration outside of New Orleans. In addition to a weekly concert</p>

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series, a nightly parade features hundreds of costumed characters, stilt walkers, festively decorated Mardi Gras floats and throngs of beads tossed from float riders.

### **Arnold Palmer Invitational Presented by MasterCard at Bay Hill**

Mar. 17-23

This annual event attracts some of the strongest golfers on the PGA Tour. Past Arnold Palmer Invitational champions who regularly play in the tournament include Tiger Woods, Fred Couples, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Tim Herron. Proceeds from the Arnold Palmer Invitational benefit the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies.

[www.arnoldpalmerinvitational.com](http://www.arnoldpalmerinvitational.com)

### **23rd Annual Florida Film Festival**

Apr. 4-13

The Florida Film Festival showcases the best in cutting-edge current cinema, indulgent experiences in food and wine, a mix of industry parties and special events, and a star-packed attendee list. Accredited by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the festival welcomes more than 25,000 guests each year, playing host to more than 100 visiting directors, producers and award-winning talent.

[www.floridafilmfestival.com](http://www.floridafilmfestival.com)

### **23rd Annual Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival**

May 14-27

The oldest, non-juried festival in the United States, the Orlando International Fringe Festival is a celebration of theatre, art and music. Fringe encompasses hundreds of shows, the Visual Fringe, outdoor concerts and “The Kids Fringe Tour.” Events are held at various venues in and around downtown Orlando. True to Fringe roots, all acts remain uncensored, exposing patrons to performances from mild to wild.

[www.orlandofringe.org](http://www.orlandofringe.org)

### **Star Wars Weekends**

May – Jun.

Star Wars characters come to life at Disney’s Hollywood Studios, where guests of all ages can come face-to-face with Chewbacca, Darth Vader and Queen Amidala, as well as other favorite sci-fi characters from the famous film series. Star Wars Weekends are scheduled for four consecutive weekends.

[www.disneyworld.com](http://www.disneyworld.com)

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## ATTRACTIONS

**Blue Spring State Park**, which is the winter home of large numbers of Florida manatees that come upstream from the St. Johns River to bask in the warm 22 °C waters of the springs. Canoeing, swimming and fishing are popular activities at Blue Springs.

**Central Florida Zoological Park**, located in Sanford on Lake Monroe. This 100 acre (400,000 m<sup>2</sup>) zoo is home to a butterfly garden, herpetarium, and numerous tropical animals. The zoo originally started as a collection in the Sanford Fire Department, but grew into a regional zoo in 1975. It is currently in the planning stages of expansion and renaming the facility to "Zoo Orlando at Sanford".

**Church Street Station**, a multi-level shopping mall and entertainment center that once featured an abundance of specialty shops, restaurants, nightclubs, and bars. Purchased in the late 1990s by TransContinental Talent owner Lou Pearlman, it is now virtually defunct, as the area suffered in post-9/11 tourist-industry slump. The area is being redeveloped with residential condominiums.

**Cirque du Soleil: La Nouba**, in Downtown Disney West Side, features its renowned blend of acrobatics and special effects with more than 70 artists from around the globe performing in a custom-designed, 1,671-seat theatre.

**Cornell Fine Arts Museum**, situated on the campus of Rollins College, features significant loans, recent acquisitions, and items from the Cornell's renowned permanent collection. Admission is free.

**Gatorland** houses thousands of alligators and crocodiles. A few of Gatorland's residents have made wrangling appearances in movies, television shows and commercial spots. The 54 year old park combines a petting zoo, bird sanctuary, mini-water park, eco-tour and outdoor entertainment, including daily alligator wrestling.

**Hard Rock Café** is the Orlando location of the famed restaurant chain with the typical HRC music memorabilia. There is also Hard Rock Live, a 3,000-capacity live music venue, and the Hard Rock Hotel, a resort hotel with a California-style restaurant called "The Kitchen". It is one of eight worldwide, and one of three in Florida. (Miami and Tampa are the other two.)

**International Trolley and Train Museum** features 14 model railroad trains with sound and lighting traveling through an indoor garden with 12 foot (4 m) high mountains, waterfalls, and more than 30 trestles and

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tunnels. Also on display are toy trains from the 1920s to the present. Visitors can catch a ride in a California Victorian-style half open/half closed trolley or the 5/8 replica of an 1880 locomotive (a Mason Bogey) with its passenger cars.

**Kennedy Space Center** is 45 minutes from Orlando and south of Daytona Beach. Visitors can tour launch areas, see giant rockets, "train" in spaceflight simulators, and much more. Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex is open every day except Christmas Day and certain launch days. Apart from the Astronaut Hall of Fame, Space Center bus tours run every 15 minutes with stops at an observation gantry and the Apollo / Saturn V Center. Other guided tours include NASA Up Close, Cape Canaveral: Then and Now, and Lunch With An Astronaut. Combo tickets offer maximum access admission, plus one guided tour.

**The Kerouac House**, in the College Park neighborhood of Orlando, is where writer Jack Kerouac lived during the time his novel *On the Road* was published and released, making him a national sensation and Beat Generation icon. He lived in the house with his mother Gabrielle from July 1957 to the spring of 1958, and wrote his three-act play, *The Beat Generation*, a 51-chorus poem called *Orlanda Blues*, and the novel *The Dharma Bums* during his time there. In 1997, the Kerouac Project of Orlando formed, and restored the Kerouac house. It is now a haven for aspiring writers who can live in the house as they create their own work.

**The Morse Museum of American Art**, located at Rollins College, houses a permanent Tiffany & Co. exhibit featuring the world's "most comprehensive" collection of the works of Louis Comfort Tiffany. It includes Tiffany art glass, jewelry, pottery, and the chapel interior designed for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. There is also an exhibit on the Tiffany home, and American paintings from the 19th century. The museum was founded in 1942.

**Old Town**, in Kissimmee, features eight restaurants, fifteen amusement park rides and 75 shops along its brick-lined streets. Classic car shows every Friday and Saturday feature hundreds of vintage automobiles. Admission and parking are free.

**The Orange County Regional History Center** Features exhibits and artifacts from the earliest days of the region to the modern day. Includes information on everything from the time of the Seminole Indians to the founding of the city to the Civil Rights era to the Disney period to today.

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	<p><b>The Orlando Museum of Art</b>, which has ongoing exhibitions of American portraits and landscapes, American impressionist works, and art of the ancient Americas.</p> <p><b>The Orlando Science Center</b>, is a 19,000 m<sup>2</sup> hands-on learning center with hundreds of interactive exhibits for visitors of all ages. Images surround visitors on the giant screen of the Dr. Phillips CineDome. Other attractions include the Body Zone, teaching health and fitness, as well as an observatory. The center has the largest refracting telescope in Florida.</p> <p><b>The Ripley's Believe It or Not!</b> Orlando Odditorium is located in a building artfully constructed to appear as if it were collapsing to one side, which may be a sly reference to central Florida's infamous sinkholes. Visitors can explore bizarre artifacts, strange collections, weird art/hobbies and interactive exhibits in sixteen odd galleries. It is one of 27 Ripley museums in ten countries.</p> <p><b>Wonder Works</b> A funhouse located on International Drive. Can be easily identified as an upside down white building.</p> <p><b>Wekiwa Springs State Park</b>, which comprises around 7,000 acres (28.3 km<sup>2</sup>) of wild Florida. The springs pump out 42 million gallons of crystal clear water a day. Popular activities at the park include canoeing, swimming, picnicking and fishing.</p> <p><b>World of Orchids</b>, featuring thousands of blooms in an enclosed tropical rainforest. World of Orchids is a working greenhouse shipping orchids and other plants nationwide. A greenhouse covers nearly 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and in this controlled climate of warm, humid air some 1,000 orchids are displayed in a natural jungle setting, with streams, waterfalls, and squawking parrots. World of Orchids also has a 300 m long boardwalk meandering off into nearby wetlands. Admission is free.</p> <p><b>Wet n' Wild</b> A large waterpark located just minutes from Universal Studios on International Drive</p>
<b>Beaches</b>	<p><b>St Petersburg/Clearwater</b> on the Gulf Coast is known as Orlando's Beach and is a two hour drive away. Here you will find some of the finest beaches anywhere in the US and they have been consistently rated as the best in the US.</p>
<b>Pools</b>	<p>In addition to four of the world's top water parks, Orlando guests enjoy some of the most unique and elaborate resort pools. Families will have a blast at the Nickelodeon Suites Resort, which features a zero-depth entry heated pool anchored by a four-storey</p>

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	<p>interactive water tower with seven water slides, flumes and a 1500-litres dump tank that spills water during a daily “Mass Sliming.”</p> <p>For a more relaxing pool experience, the JW Marriott, Orlando Grande Lakes Resort, a 7,315-square-metre long Lazy River Pool is the largest pool area in Central Florida.</p> <p>A must-see for music fans, the rock and roll-themed pool at Hard Rock Hotel features a 73-metre water slide and an underwater audio system. Find out more about Orlando’s cool pools at <a href="http://www.visitorlando.com/blog">www.visitorlando.com/blog</a></p>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<p>You can have close encounters with manatees and alligators.</p> <p><b>SeaWorld</b> shows off the many aspects of marine life.</p> <p><b>Disney’s Animal Kingdom</b> is the perfect introduction to the wildlife of the African Plains.</p> <p><b>Central Florida Zoo &amp; Botanical Gardens</b> showcases hundreds of rare or endangered animals, including cheetahs, elephants, kangaroos, baboons, leopards and some of the most powerful snakes in the world. Newly opened is ZOOM Air Adventures, a zip-line experience.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centralfloridazoo.org">www.centralfloridazoo.org</a> 407-323-4450</p>
<b>Parks</b>	<p>There are over 100 parks in and around Orlando, so no lack of green spaces to enjoy here!</p>
<b>Gardens</b>	<p><b>Harry P. Leu Gardens</b>, which is an inner city oasis covering 50 acres (20,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and features colorful annuals, palms, an orchid house, a floral clock and a butterfly garden. The garden boasts the largest camellia collection in eastern North America and includes the Leu House Museum, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p><a href="http://www.leugardens.org">www.leugardens.org</a> 407-246-2620</p>

<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>Shopping is a thrill ride of its own in Central Florida, where a wealth of fashion-forward stores, boutiques, and outlets are a gold mine for visitors. Considered Central Florida’s signature shopping street, Park Avenue in Winter Park offers shoppers several blocks of trendy boutiques and brand-name stores.</p> <p>Canadians should note that one extremely unique thing about shopping in Orlando is that the outlet centers are located very close to all of the major attractions. Many other cities have them located outside of the major attraction areas.</p> <p>Within a 20-minute radius, not only are there six major theme parks and 450 hotels, but also twelve shopping malls and outlet centers. It all adds up to enough shopping options to fill the equivalent of 900 football fields lined up side-by-side.</p> <p>Central Florida offers fashionistas the world’s most popular names in shopping, including Burberry, Giorgio Armani, Louis Vuitton, Jimmy Choo, Salvatore Ferragamo and more than 100 other designer brands, as well as major department stores such as Bloomingdale’s, Neiman</p>

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	<p>Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue and Florida's first Macy's. Orlando was recently named the top bargain shopping destination by Forbes Magazine</p> <p><b>Winter Park</b>, Central Florida's oldest community dating back to the 1880's, offers 10 city blocks of boutiques, wine bars, and cafes along beautiful tree-lined streets.</p> <p>One way to make an Orlando shopping experience even better is to enlist the help of a <b>personal shopper</b> (offered by each of the area's premier shopping centres) or sign up for a group shopping tour.</p> <p>The exclusive <b>The Mall at Millenia</b>, anchored by Neiman Marcus and Bloomingdale's, is home to such high-end stores as Dior, Jimmy Choo, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, St. John and Cartier.</p> <p><b>The Florida Mall</b>, Central Florida's largest shopping destination, rounds out the high-end department store offerings with Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom.</p> <p><b>Orlando Premium Outlets</b> and Prime Outlets Orlando provide even more exposure to designer merchandise, this time at discount prices, with stores like Barney's Outlet and Neiman Marcus Last Call, respectively.</p> <p><b>Pointe Orlando</b> features a collection of outdoor shopping, dining and entertainment options in the heart of the attractions area. Located on International Drive, guests can shop at more than 40 specialty retail stores, including Artsy Abode and Armani Exchange; dine at restaurants like The Capital Grille or B.B King's Blues Club; and enjoy entertainment venues, such as Regal Cinemas and the Orlando Improv Comedy Club &amp; Dinner Theatre.</p> <p><a href="http://www.pointeorlando.com">www.pointeorlando.com</a> 407-248-2838</p>
<b>Markets</b>	Great farmers markets and flea markets in the area
<b>Nightlife</b>	Nightlife consists of ultra-hip bars, high-energy dance clubs, happening game spots, multi-venue entertainment complexes, comedy clubs and plenty of venues filled with live music located from Downtown Orlando to the attractions area.
<b>Casinos</b>	A <b>Sterling Casino Cruise</b> aboard the world's largest gaming ship is a sure bet for fun-twice daily free cruises depart from nearby Cape Canaveral. Those without their sea legs can make a two-hour drive to the Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Tampa.

<b>CUISINE</b>	
<b>Food</b>	<p>There are more than <b>5,300 restaurants</b> in the area with continental and ethnic cuisine in unique settings including upscale and fine dining. You name your dining theme and you can find it in Orlando! It would take nearly five years to eat in all of Orlando's restaurants if you ate in three each day...</p>

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<p><b>Wine</b></p>	<p><b>Lakeridge Winery &amp; Vineyards:</b> Free guided winery tour and wine tasting at Florida's largest award-winning winery. Gift shop, picnic area, festivals and concerts          Location: 19239 US 27 North, Clermont, FL 34715; website: <a href="http://www.lakeridgewinery.com">www.lakeridgewinery.com</a> Tel: 352-394-8627 · 800-768-9463</p>
<p><b>Restaurants</b></p>	<p>It should come as no surprise that Orlando has something for everybody when it comes to pleasing your palate, ranging from fast food to four-star restaurants and everything in between. The city overflows with over <b>5000 dining options</b> though it's usually noted for its many theme and chain restaurants. Here some suggestions from our friends at Frommer's:</p> <p><b>Best Spot for a Romantic Dinner:</b> Victoria &amp; Albert's (tel. 407/939-3463) will spoil you with superior service and stylish surroundings. Dinner is an intimate seven-course meal offering some of the finest food around.</p> <p><b>Best Value:</b> At Romano's Macaroni Grill (tel. 407/239-6676), the casual yet lively ambience and the northern Italian cuisine score very highly, and prices are low, low, low.</p> <p><b>Best Spot for Celebrating:</b> Emeril's at Universal's CityWalk (tel. 407/224-2424) is a great choice for a high-end special occasion. For the pure party factor, you can't beat Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville (tel. 407/224-2155) at CityWalk.</p> <p><b>Best for Kids:</b> Kids adore the meals served up with Disney characters bounding about and there are plenty to choose from throughout the Walt Disney World resorts and theme parks. They also love the eclectic atmosphere, sounds and visuals of the jungle-themed Rainforest Cafe at Downtown Disney Marketplace (tel. 407/827-8500) and Animal Kingdom (tel. 407/938-9100). Monkey business is strongly encouraged there.</p> <p><b>The world's largest McDonald's</b> can also be found in Orlando, right on 6875 Sand Lake Rd. (tel. 407/351-2185). The location boasts a huge tubular maze with 25,000 feet of twists, turns, sliding, crawling, and jumping space for kids to play in. Another unique feature: You can book hotels, transportation, buy attraction tickets, and get daily park information, all while enjoying your fries and a Coke (or, in this case, maybe a gourmet coffee).</p> <p>And here are <b>ten new</b> restaurants to check out:</p> <p><b>Big Fin Seafood Kitchen</b> for fresh global seafood, steaks, pasta, as well as a sushi and raw bar in a classy, casual restaurant at Pointe Orlando.</p> <p><b>Crave</b> – Orlando for quality, locally sourced food with Mediterranean and Asian influences in a trendy atmosphere, located at The Mall at</p>

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	<p>Millenia.</p> <p><b>Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse</b> for world-famous steak at the first Delmonico's opened outside of New York, located on International Drive.</p> <p><b>Fat Fish Blue</b> for creative Louisiana-French cuisine and traditional American favorites in a relaxed atmosphere at Pointe Orlando.</p> <p><b>Fleming's Prime Steakhouse &amp; Wine Bar</b> for classic steakhouse offerings and tempting wine in a contemporary setting, on Orlando's famous "Restaurant Row."</p> <p><b>Funky Monkey Wine Company</b> for eclectic, modern American fare and famous wine dinners in an upscale, yet relaxed environment in Pointe Orlando.</p> <p><b>Kouzzina by Cat Cora</b> for Mediterranean fare from celebrity and Iron Chef Cora, at Disney's BoardWalk Entertainment District in the Walt DisneyWorld Resort.</p> <p><b>La Luce</b> by Donna Scala for rustic Italian cuisine, Mediterranean-inspired drinks and a Trattoria-style wine program at Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.</p> <p><b>Oceanaire Seafood Room</b> for chic atmosphere reminiscent of 1930s and 1940s supper clubs, with more than 25 types of seafood and shellfish flown in daily.</p> <p><b>Treasure Tavern</b> for a new adult dining experience; a Caribbean outpost-themed three-course meal and two-hour show featuring comedians, acrobats and dancers.</p>
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<b>MORE INFO</b>	For real-time updates, follow Orlando at <a href="http://www.Twitter.com/VisitOrlando">www.Twitter.com/VisitOrlando</a> and <a href="http://www.Facebook.com/VisitOrlando">www.Facebook.com/VisitOrlando</a> . While in Orlando, visitors can stop by the Official Visitor Center, located at 8723 International Drive.
<b>Brochures</b>	<p>For more information about vacation experiences in Orlando, to order a complimentary vacation planning kit that includes a comprehensive Official Visitors Guide and Orlando Magicard or to purchase discount attraction tickets, visitors can log onto Orlando's official website at <a href="http://www.VisitOrlando.com">www.VisitOrlando.com</a> or call an Official Travel Counselor at 1-800-551-0181 or 407-363-5872.</p> <p>For real time updates, follow Orlando on Twitter at <a href="http://www.Twitter.com/VisitOrlando">www.Twitter.com/VisitOrlando</a> or Facebook at <a href="http://www.Facebook.com/VisitOrlando">www.Facebook.com/VisitOrlando</a> .</p> <p>While in Orlando, visitors may stop by the Official Visitor Center located at 8723 International Drive.</p>
<b>Websites</b>	<a href="http://www.orlandoinfo.com/canada">www.orlandoinfo.com/canada</a> for information on Orlando and lots more.

<b>CURRENT DEALS October 2013</b>	Special savings exclusively for Canadians and new attractions at Universal Orlando Resort, SeaWorld Orlando and Walt Disney World Resort make this the perfect time to book an Orlando vacation.
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	<p>Now in its fifth year, Visit Orlando’s popular Deals Made for Canadians program provides special savings on dining, accommodations, attractions and more, including discounts up to 35% at Central Florida’s major theme parks and rates as low as \$69 a night along Orlando’s popular International Drive.</p> <p>Additional information on all “Deals Made for Canadians,” participating establishments and special events are available at <a href="http://www.VisitOrlando.ca">www.VisitOrlando.ca</a> or by calling (800) 551-2006. Sample offers include:</p> <p>Theme Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SeaWorld Orlando – Enjoy a full day at SeaWorld Orlando plus All-Day Dining (a \$32.99 value), with each full paid admission</li> <li>• Universal Orlando Resort – 4-night vacations starting from only \$299* per adult, tax inclusive</li> <li>• Walt Disney World Resort – Save up to 35% at Select Disney Resort Hotels this fall*</li> <li>• LEGOLAND Florida – Canadians receive 25% off regular priced adult and child tickets</li> </ul> <p>Lodging &amp; other Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoCo Key Hotel and Water Resort (International Drive) – Rates from \$69</li> <li>• Sheraton Vistana Villages (International Drive) – Save up to 25% off nightly room rates</li> <li>• Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek (Lake Buena Vista) - 20% discount off five nights or more stay. Rates start at \$159 per night</li> <li>• Boggy Creek Airboat Rides – \$5 off adult tickets on any tour</li> <li>• Titanic The Experience - Save 25% off admission</li> <li>• NBA City - Receive 15% off food bill</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Orlando Preferred Visitor Magicard</b> offers great savings on a variety of area attractions, accommodations, restaurants and shops. To get your free card: request online and they will send you one, along with their comprehensive Destination Guide so you can plan your trip. If you're in town, pay the Official Visitors Center a visit to pick up your free Magicard. The Official Visitors Center will also provide you with all the vacation planning information you need including maps, tickets and more.</p>
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<p><b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</b></p>	<p>I have been to Orlando numerous times and never fail to have a wonderful time and discover new experiences!</p> <p>For the shows in 2010, I was on location at Walt Disney World for their Disney Wine and Dine Half Marathon Weekend – see my travel blog at: <a href="http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2010/10/disney-wine-dine-half-marathon-weekend.html">http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2010/10/disney-wine-dine-half-marathon-weekend.html</a> And for the shows in 2011, I was on location in</p>
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	Orlando (which included shopping at Prime Outlets Orlando!) – see my travel blog at: <a href="http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2011/01/kookaburras-otters-and-shopping.html">http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2011/01/kookaburras-otters-and-shopping.html</a>
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