



Destination Guide: Orlando



Top Picks From AAA Travel Editors - Travel information you can trust

AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks

AAA Destination Guide: Orlando includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Walt Disney World® Resort opened in the Orlando area in 1971, setting into motion a Florida tourism boom of grand proportions. With a clone of the West Coast's Disneyland in their back yards, devotees of all things Mickey Mouse east of the Mississippi no longer had to trek across country to tap into the magic. As Disney's East Coast kingdom grew exponentially, so, too, did the competition that eventually transformed Orlando into one big theme park of a destination. Walt Disney World set the bar for wholesome family fun and then raised it time after time with faster rides, cuter characters and livelier entertainment to captivate every age group.



Beyond Orlando's man-made wonders are sparkling lakes, lovely gardens, relaxing state parks and, within shouting distance, a string of Atlantic Coast beaches. Add to this list championship golf courses, luxury resorts with spas, cuisine to please the international palate and shopping districts that run the gamut from bargain outlets to upscale malls, and Orlando measures up to a full-out, year-round crowd pleaser.

With Disney's four major theme parks, Universal's two, and marine adventure parks SeaWorld and Discovery Cove, plus more than 90 other area attractions, fantasy is always on tap here. If Orlando could be squeezed and reduced to concentrate, like the juicy citrus that used to grow nearby in abundance, its essence would be pure entertainment—nectar for all who thirst for a family-oriented good time.

Essentials

Go to [Gatorland](#), a slice of roadside Americana since 1949, and watch with amazement as alligators lunge for lunch and wrestle with handlers.

Feed the swans or ride paddleboat likenesses in downtown Orlando's centerpiece, [Lake Eola Park](#), where locals stroll and relax. This photogenic beauty has a landscaped walkway, shade trees, a lighted fountain and an amphitheater—site of concerts and cultural events.

Cool off at a water park—a must in summer, when the mercury routinely moves into the high 90s. Choose between [Wet 'n Wild](#), [Aquatica](#), [Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park](#) or [Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park](#).

Glide on the fin of a bottlenose dolphin or swim in a lagoon filled with rays at [Discovery Cove Orlando](#). Catch glimpses of wildlife while your airboat scoots across the headwaters of the Everglades. [Boggy Creek Airboat Rides](#) offers this exhilarating “wild Florida” encounter.

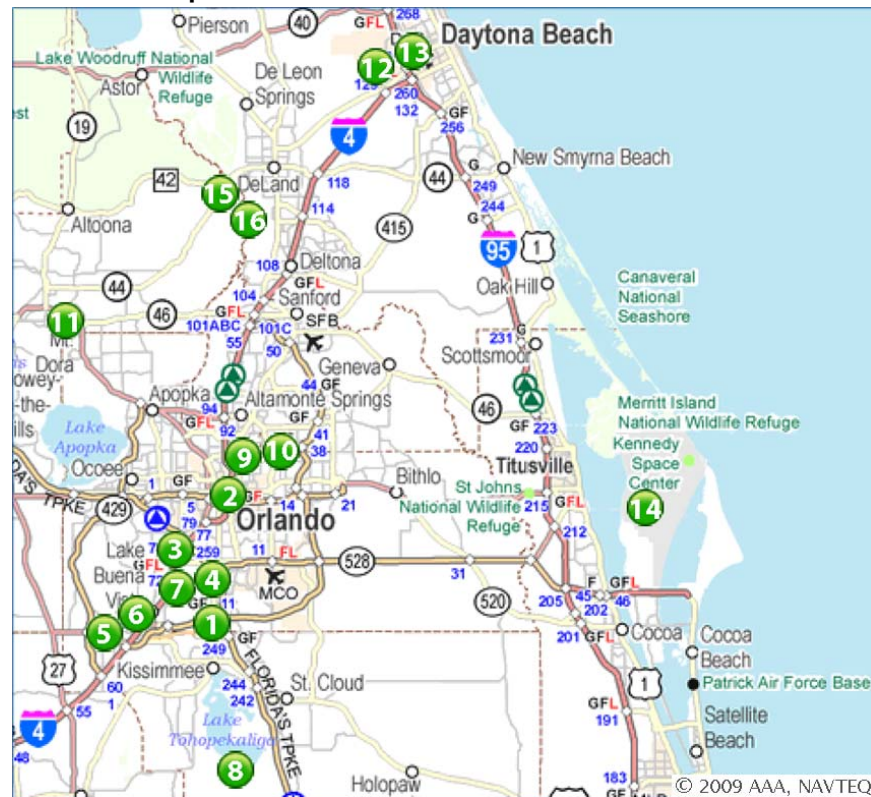
Stroll for the sheer pleasure of it in [Winter Park](#) along refined Park Avenue, which features designer boutiques, sidewalk cafes, cozy restaurants, shops with high-end home décor and a centrally located park. At [Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art](#), bask in the aura of Louis Comfort Tiffany's stunning stained-glass creations, a renowned collection that has no equal. Lovely lakeside residences and natural scenery are highlights of a narrated cruise on Winter Park's chain of lakes, offered by [Scenic Boat Tours](#).

Venture out to the charming village of [Mount Dora](#), central Florida's antiques and collectibles capital. This small town overlooking Lake Dora draws quite a crowd on weekends; arrive early to get a good parking spot.

Drive to [Daytona Beach](#), home of [Daytona 500 Experience](#) and [Daytona International Speedway](#). NASCAR races dominate the track several times a year, but tours are available when the track is silent; enter Daytona 500 Experience anytime to participate in simulated racing action and so much more. Walk through a space shuttle, watch space footage filmed by astronauts and relive Neil Armstrong's historic moon landing at [Kennedy Space Center](#). This escape to reality is well worth a daytrip to the Space Coast.

Synchronize a pilgrimage to [Blue Spring State Park](#), in Orange City, with the annual winter migration of manatees from the cool waters of the St. Johns River to the park's warm spring. Let [St. Johns River Cruises](#) show you more of the state's longest river and its environs.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Gatorland

14501 S Orange Blossom Tr
Orlando, FL 32837
Phone: (800) 393-5297

2. Lake Eola Park

101 N Rosalind
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 232-0111

3. Wet 'n Wild

6200 International Drive
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 351-1800



4. Aquatica

5800 Water Play Way
Orlando, FL 32821
Phone: (407) 351-3600

5. Disney's Blizzard Beach

1500 W Buena Vista Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 560-9283

6. Disney's Typhoon Lagoon

1195 E Buena Vista Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 560-9283

7. Discovery Cove Orlando

6000 Discovery Cove Way
Orlando, FL 32821
Phone: (877) 434-7268



8. Boggy Creek Airboat Rides

2001 E Southport Rd
Kissimmee, FL 34746
Phone: (407) 344-9550



9. Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

445 N Park Ave
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 645-5311



10. Scenic Boat Tours

312 E Morse Blvd
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 644-4056



11. Mount Dora

Chamber of Commerce
341 N Alexander St
Mount Dora, FL 32757
Phone: (352) 383-2165

12. Daytona 500 Experience

1801 W International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (386) 681-6800



13. Daytona Int'l Speedway

1801 W International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (800) 748-7467

14. Kennedy Space Center

Port Canaveral
Phone: (321) 449-4444

15. Blue Spring State Park

2100 W. French Ave
Orange City, FL 32763
Phone: (386) 775-3663

16. St. Johns River Cruises

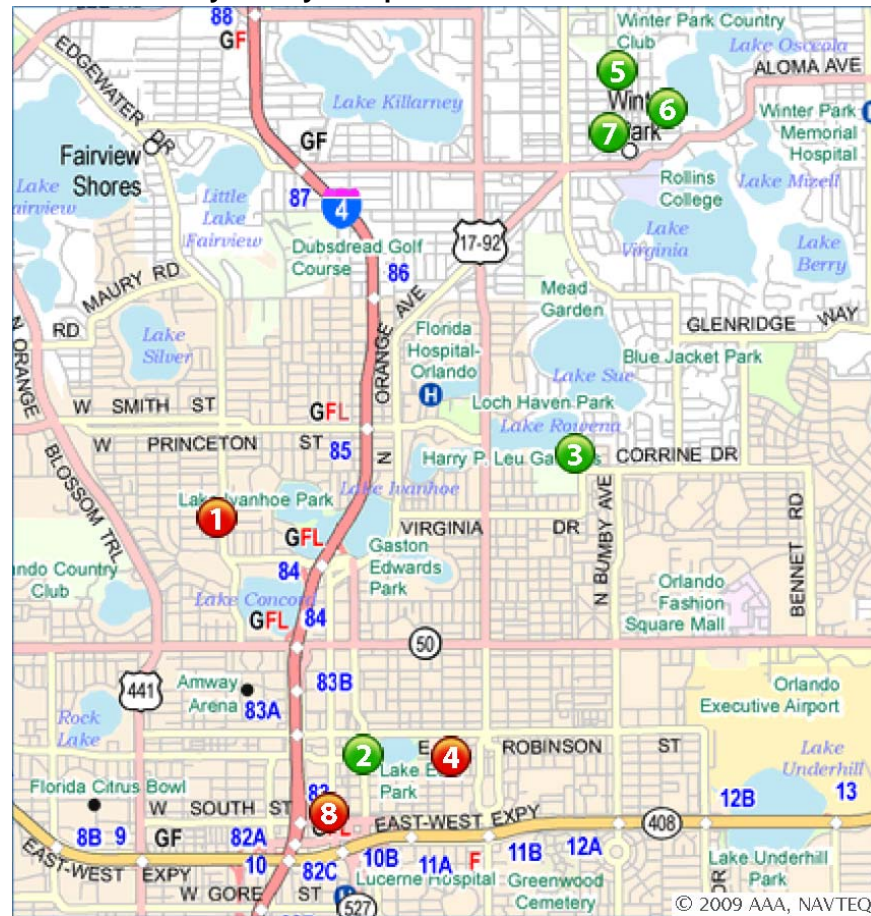
2100 W. French Ave
Orange City, FL 32763
Phone: (407) 330-1612

Orlando in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Orlando.

Millions vacation in Orlando each year. If you're among the park-hopping majority, you've probably arrived clutching multiday passes to Walt Disney World Resort, Universal Orlando Resort or SeaWorld Orlando—or

Orlando in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Day 1 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Shakers American Cafe 

1308 Edgewater Dr
 Orlando, FL 32804
 Phone: (407) 422-3534

2. Lake Eola Park

101 N Rosalind
 Orlando, FL 32801
 Phone: (407) 232-0111

3. Harry P. Leu Gardens

1920 N Forest Ave
 Orlando, FL 32803
 Phone: (407) 246-2620

4. Dexter's of Thornton Park 

808 E Washington St
 Orlando, FL 32801
 Phone: (407) 648-2777

5. Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

445 N Park Ave
 Winter Park, FL 32789
 Phone: (407) 645-5311



6. Winter Park Historical Museum

200 W New England Ave
 Winter Park, FL 32790
 Phone: (407) 647-8180

7. Scenic Boat Tours

312 E Morse Blvd
 Winter Park, FL 32789
 Phone: (407) 644-4056



8. The Boheme 

325 S Orange Ave
 Orlando, FL 32801
 Phone: (407) 313-9000

all of the above. Why not set aside a day or more to discover greater Orlando's other assets? You'll be pleasantly surprised by what lies outside those theme park gates. So hop in a car and go exploring.

Day 1: Morning

Start with a diner-style breakfast at Shakers American Cafe, in the trendy College Park neighborhood. The restaurant's moniker refers to kitschy collection of salt and pepper shakers displayed on its walls.

Walk off that Western omelet in postcard-worthy Lake Eola Park. A band shell, amphitheater and lighted fountain punctuate the City Beautiful's 43-acre downtown oasis, a landmark since 1888. Toss bread to plucky

ducks, pedal a swan boat across Lake Eola, or just plop down on a shaded bench and savor the serenity.

While the dew is still on the roses, amble through [Harry P. Leu Gardens](#) and experience sensory overload among vibrant seasonal blooms, lush semitropical plants, a camellia collection unequalled in the South and one of Florida's largest formal rose gardens. At some point, tour Leu House Museum.

Afternoon

Lunch recommendations couldn't be simpler. Try [Dexter's of Thornton Park](#), downtown, or head for the original—[Dexter's of Winter Park](#)—in nearby [Winter Park](#).

After lunch, stroll along Winter Park's chic Park Avenue, where you can shop at trendy clothing boutiques or pop into the [Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art](#) to view an acclaimed Tiffany glass collection.

If you can't get enough of this upscale urban village, pick up an audiotape tour from the [Winter Park Historical Museum](#), or opt for a relaxing sightseeing cruise offered by [Scenic Boat Tours](#). You'll see lovely lakeside homes as your pontoon boat putters quietly along a chain of canals.

Evening

With myriad entertainment options ranging from Broadway stage shows to a resident philharmonic orchestra to concerts by visiting top-name artists, Orlando's cultural calendar never disappoints. The Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau Official Visitor Center, 8723 International Dr., distributes a variety of information that can help you plan a night on the town starting with a romantic dinner at [The Boheme](#) in [The Grand Bohemian Hotel](#).

Day 2: Morning

If your children equate theme parks with the ultimate Florida adventure, introduce them to one of the state's wildest—and oldest—attractions: [Gatorland](#), established in 1949, teems with wrestling alligators, crawling crocodiles and a serpentarium stocked with snakes. Discover more of natural Florida with [Boggy Creek Airboat Rides](#) in [Kissimmee](#). From a

dock on East Lake Tohopekaliga, your airboat skims across the Everglades headwaters on a river of grass while you watch for gators, birds and native wildlife. Afterwards, grab a sandwich at East Lake Fish Camp.

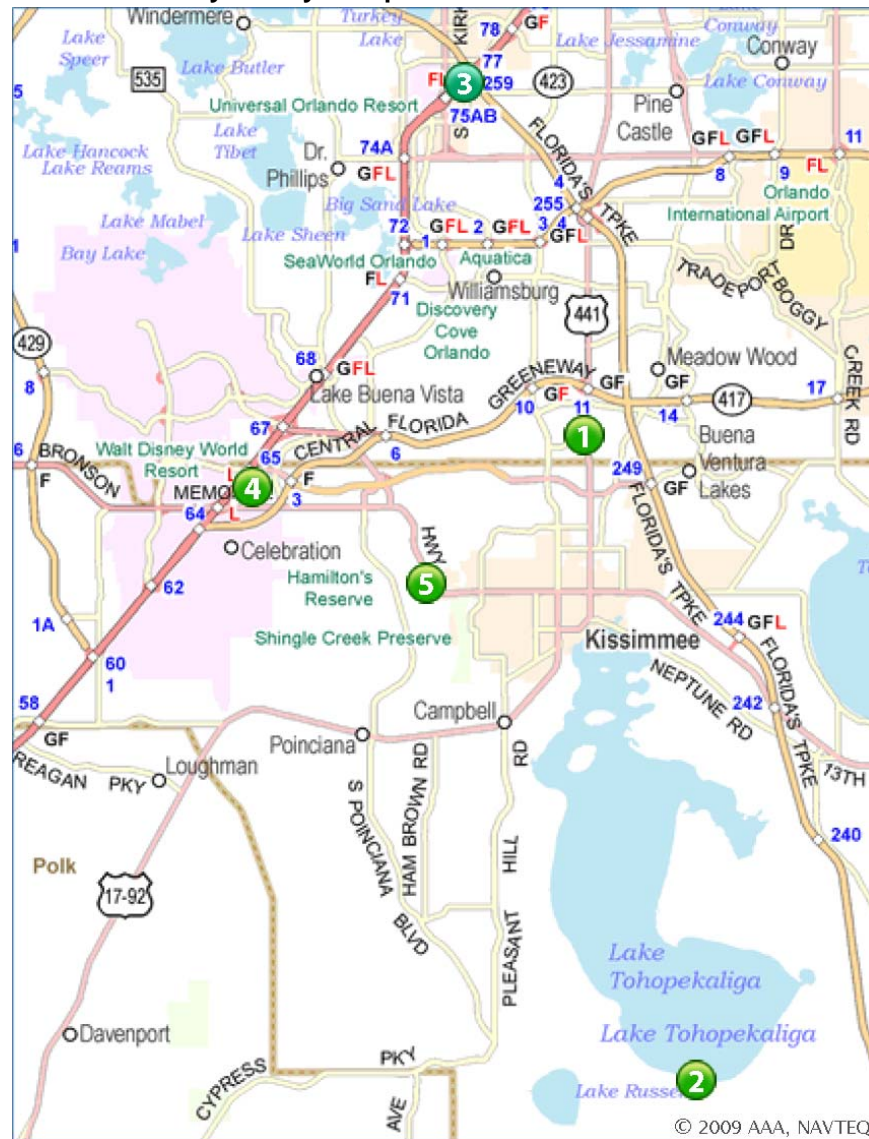
Afternoon

To stalk the elusive “bargainus fantasticus,” load the words Prime Outlets into your mapping device and aim the car in the direction of International Drive (I-Drive, to locals). Shooting from the wallet will bag trophy-size bargains at this shopping jungle, which harbors big-name designer stores Calvin Klein, Ann Taylor, Tommy Hilfiger, Liz Claiborne and more. Head to the upscale Mall at Millenia on Conroy Road for Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Jimmy Choo and other chic brands.

Evening

When the dinner hour nears, get more bang for your buck at such family-friendly dinner shows as [Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament](#) and [Arabian Nights](#). In addition to a spectacular arena performance, each venue serves up an informal, finger-licking feast and a good time.

Orlando in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

 - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Gatorland

14501 S Orange Blossom Tr
Orlando, FL 32837
Phone: (800) 393-5297

2. Boggy Creek Airboat Rides

2001 E Southport Rd
Kissimmee, FL 34746
Phone: (407) 344-9550

3. Prime Outlets

4951 International Dr
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 352-9600

4. Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament

4510 W Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy
Kissimmee, FL 34746
Phone: (407) 396-1518

5. Arabian Nights

3081 Arabian Nights Blvd
Kissimmee, FL 34747
Phone: (407) 239-9223

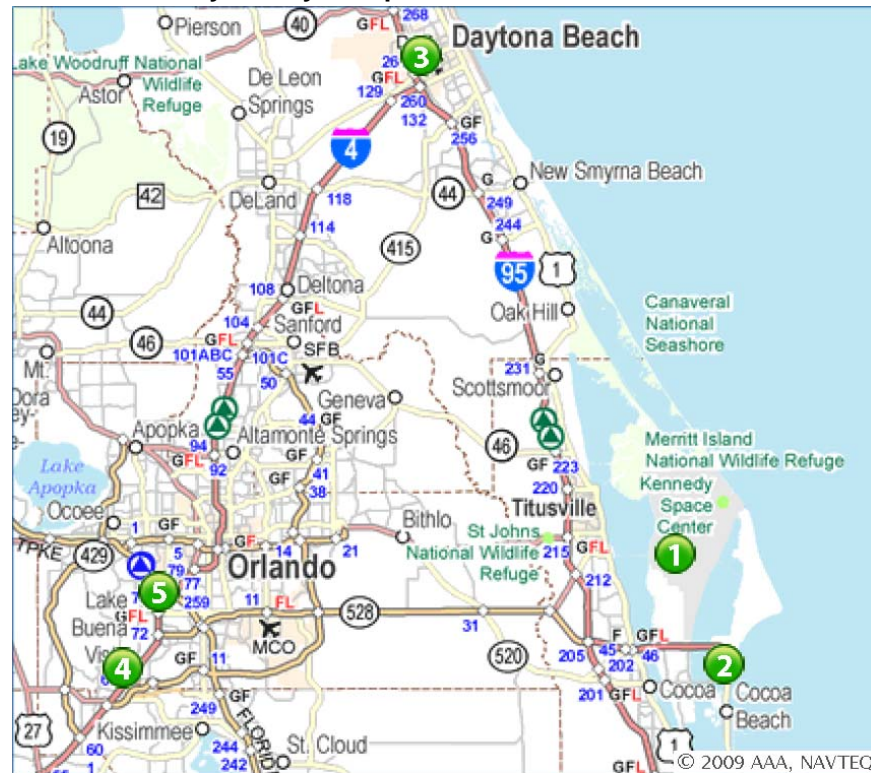
Day 3: Morning

Rock your world at Kennedy Space Center. Arrive early and beat the crowds at Shuttle Launch Experience, a realistic simulation of a space adventure and the center's newest ride. With riveting exhibits, site tours, films, real rockets and an opportunity to have lunch with an astronaut, KSC can hold you in its orbit for the better part of a day.

Afternoon

As long as you're on Florida's "Space Coast," embrace the spirit of exploration. From KSC drive due south on SR A1A to Cocoa Beach, stopping at Cocoa Beach Pier for a hot dog and a nice ocean view or at Ron Jon's Surf Shop for a souvenir or two. Continue south through a string of beach communities to land's end, at the tip of the barrier island. Or maybe head north from KSC to Daytona Beach and steer your vehicle onto the hard-packed sand where auto-racing history was made in the early 1900s. If time allows, consider visiting the Daytona 500 Experience.

Orlando in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Evening

Hopefully, you've made reservations for Cirque du Soleil's La Nouba, at [Downtown Disney Area](#). This is one of Orlando's hottest ongoing shows and the only performing resident Cirque troupe outside of Las Vegas. Arrive early or stay late for dinner at one of Downtown Disney's many restaurants— [Portobello Yacht Club](#), [Rainforest Cafe](#) or [Bongos Cuban Café](#), to name a few.

If you've already seen La Nouba, opt for an evening at [Universal CityWalk](#). Laugh 'till your cheeks hurt at the outrageous antics performed by alienlike Blue Man Group; drool over menu options at [Emeril's](#); and later, sip a signature Hurricane while you belt out a song or two at the

Day 3 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Kennedy Space Center

Port Canaveral
Phone: (321) 449-4444,
(321) 454-4198

4. Downtown Disney Area

1780 Buena Vista Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 934-7781

2. Cocoa Beach

3. Daytona 500 Experience

1801 W. International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (386) 681-6800

5. Universal CityWalk

6000 Universal Blvd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-8000



piano bar in [Pat O'Brien's](#), a replica of the famous New Orleans nightspot.

Restaurants

Our favorites include some of this destination's best restaurants—from fine dining to simple fare.

While downtown Orlando restaurants typically cater to power-lunching professionals and after-five urban diners, savvy visitors, too, contribute to their patron base. Here's a trio that runs the gamut from casual to trendy to elegant.

Upscale [Hue](#) is the gathering place of those who want to see and be seen. Chefs here interpret continental Asian cuisine through such tempting entrees as wood-grilled, sesame-glazed ahi tuna or roast duck with tamari sauce. A towering, Bourbon-laced pecan pie topped with vanilla ice cream and caramelized spiced apples is a dessert your whole party can share. Hue's proximity to Lake Eola and Thornton Park makes it an ideal starting point for a night on the town.

With the business district just a stone's throw away, it may be difficult to get a table at [The Boheme](#) during the lunchtime rush, but a relaxed,

romantic mood prevails in the evening. Chef Robert Mason's imaginative dinner menu reads like poetry: seared Bohemian foie gras, escargot pot-au-feu, Cognac lobster bisque, asparagus-crusting diver scallops, noisette of thyme-seared veal, roasted Chilean sea bass, a study in crème brûlée. For the indecisive, the chef has simmered the options down to a flavorful "reduction"—a pre-selected six-course tasting menu. A sumptuous Sunday jazz brunch features salads, sushi, seafood, meats ranging from lamb to venison, eggs Florentine or otherwise, and pastries and sweets. The Boheme's warm and inviting atmosphere, elaborate food selections and wonderful service make it one of the hottest urban, fine-dining restaurants for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

A smorgasbord of restaurants lies just beyond the downtown perimeter. With the smell of fresh-brewed coffee, sizzling bacon and fried potato cakes wafting out the door, it's no wonder Shakers American Cafe is busy the moment it opens for breakfast. The lunch menu features traditional mile-high sandwiches and refreshing house specials like Annie's Apple—two slices of pumpernickel bread stuffed with apples, raisins, bacon, lettuce, cream cheese and melted Swiss cheese. This off-the-beaten-path neighborhood eatery, just minutes from downtown in trendy College Park, appeals to patrons for the wholesome food, friendly service and small-town atmosphere.

Bubbalou's Bodacious Bar-B-Que, also in Winter Park and Altamonte Springs, has been featured in *Fortune* and *Southern Living* magazines and *The New York Times*, and it has been touted No. 1 for barbecue in television documentaries on Food Network and CNN. So patrons should not be surprised to find long lines for lunch or dinner. Favorites include baby back ribs, the Memphis pulled-pork sandwich with slaw, and the four-meat combo, not to mention numerous sauces with whimsical names reflecting their intensity or lack thereof. Follow your nose to the nearest Bubbalou's, or look for their trademark sign featuring three dancing pink pigs.

Shop while you dine at White Wolf Cafe. Besides what's on the menu, you can buy the décor of this one-of-a-kind eatery in Orlando's antiques district. Creative lunchtime eats include internationally inspired salads—Moroccan, Greek, Galileo and nicoise as well as the café's signature

Waldorf; or try the flatbread pizza of the day—Thursdays it's the Tuscan, with prosciutto, roasted peppers, herbs and mozzarella. Dinner entrees like apple-and-walnut-stuffed pork tenderloin or sumptuous sea scallops encrusted with toasted pistachios are equally imaginative. And remember, if you just can't live without that vintage chandelier hanging overhead, ask the waiter to add it to your tab.

With the flip of a "Stop/Go" disk on the table, patrons control the Gaucho-costumed carvers parading fire-roasted cuts of Angus beef, pork, chicken, lamb and Brazilian sausage around the dining room at Texas de Brazil. A choice of 14 meats plus two side dishes—mashed potatoes and fried plantains—and a 40-item salad bar with an enticing array of appetizers, salads, soups and extras make for a Texas-size, pay-one-price meal served in the tradition of South American cowboys. Don't let the upscale décor throw you off: The ambiance of this Brazilian steak house is conducive to casual or business dining, with or without the kids.

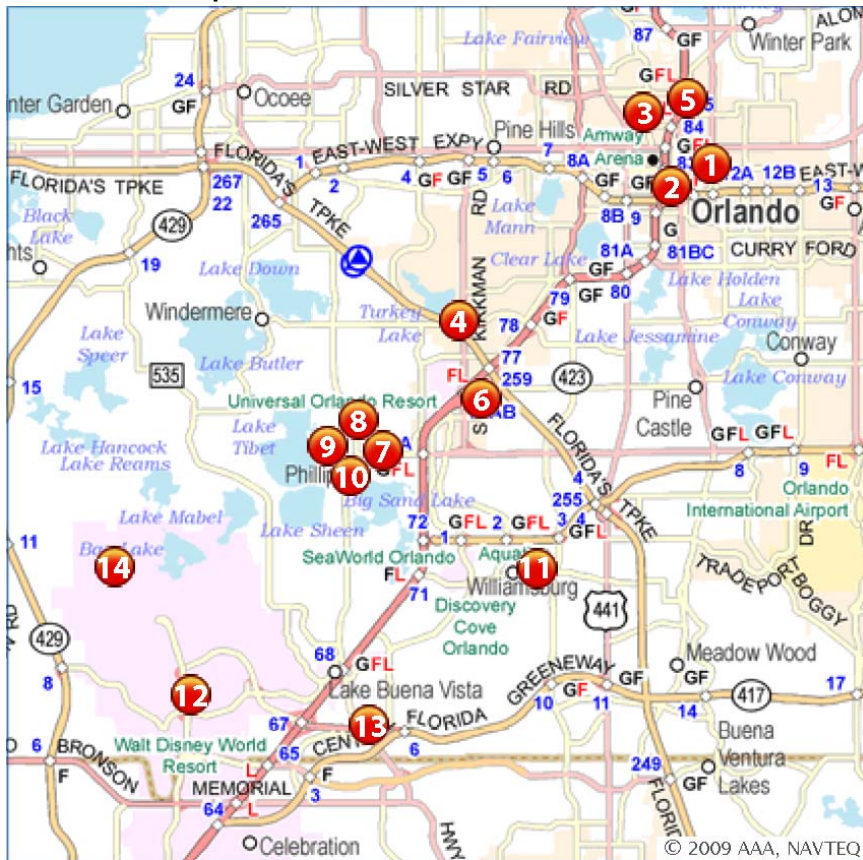
Sand Lake Road is so saturated with quality restaurants that it has become known as Restaurant Row. At Cedar's Restaurant a slight language barrier between servers and guests does not keep diners from enjoying some of the area's best authentic Lebanese and Mediterranean fare. Take, for example, baba ghanouj, a grilled eggplant appetizer with garlic, lemon juice and sesame cream; or house specialty kibbeh bilsanieh, composed of fried ground beef and cracked wheat shells stuffed with onions and pine nuts and served with yogurt sauce. Sip on wine selected from an extensive list, and end your meal with delicious Turkish coffee. A casual, gardenlike setting and rhythmic background music further flavor this Middle Eastern dining experience.

Seasons 52 is named for the number of weeks in a year, an apropos moniker considering this restaurant's mission is to create healthy and tasty creations using only the freshest ingredients in season. Most of the calorie-conscious entrees are grilled. Pair choices like herb ricotta ravioli or ahi tuna steak with wine chosen from an extensive list—more than 100 labels, with at least 70 available by the glass—that complements the ever-changing seasonal menu. End your meal on a sweet note with a "mini indulgence," a bite-size portion of such desserts as red velvet cake, key lime pie or tiramisu packed into a shot glass. If your plans include

wine tasting, socializing or adventurous dining, Seasons 52 is an excellent choice. Using “the freshest seafood from the oceans of planet Earth,” Moon Fish blends Pan Asian, Cajun, Pacific Rim, and Floribbean styles to create its unique fish-centered fusion cuisine. The menu includes sushi and raw-bar selections ranging from oysters to duck capriccio. Contemporary surroundings centered on an aquatic-theme offer a whimsical approach to fine dining.

and popular selections, this ristorante also offers Black Angus steaks and veal, lamb and pork dishes. You are treated like family at Antonio's, which is why this restaurant and the original north of Orlando in Maitland have a strong following of loyal patrons.

Restaurants Map



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The aromas emanating from the Italian kitchen at Antonio's are guaranteed to make your mouth water. Known for its fish and seafood selections, fresh-baked bread and the 250-bottle wine cellar housing rare

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com; AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Hue </p> <p>629 E Central Blvd
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 849-1800</p> | <p>8. Seasons 52 </p> <p>7700 Sand Lake Rd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 354-5212</p> |
| <p>2. The Boheme </p> <p>325 S Orange Ave
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 313-9000</p> | <p>9. Moon Fish </p> <p>7525 W Sand Lake Rd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-7262</p> |
| <p>3. Shakers American Café </p> <p>1308 Edgewater Dr
Orlando, FL 32804
Phone: (407) 422-3534</p> | <p>10. Antonio's </p> <p>7559 W Sand Lake Rd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-9191</p> |
| <p>4. Bubbalou's Bodacious Bar-B-Que </p> <p>5818 Conroy Rd
Orlando, FL 32835
Phone: (407) 295-1212</p> | <p>11. Primo </p> <p>4040 Central Florida Pkwy
Orlando, FL 32837
Phone: (407) 393-4444</p> |
| <p>5. White Wolf Cafe </p> <p>1829 N Orange Ave
Orlando, FL 32804
Phone: (407) 895-9911</p> | <p>12. Todd English's bluezoo </p> <p>1500 Epcot Resorts Blvd
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 934-4644</p> |
| <p>6. Texas de Brazil </p> <p>5259 International Dr
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 355-0355</p> | <p>13. The Venetian Room </p> <p>8101 World Center Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32821
Phone: (407) 238-8060</p> |
| <p>7. Cedar's Restaurant </p> <p>7732 W Sand Lake Rd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 351-6000</p> | <p>14. Victoria & Albert's </p> <p>4401 Grand Floridian Way
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 939-3463</p> |

South of Restaurant Row you will find Primo, the inspiration of New England chef and restaurateur Melissa Kelly, who has been featured in Food and Wine, Wine Spectator, Town and Country and O, The Oprah Magazine. She pairs contemporary Italian cuisine with fresh local

ingredients for such dishes as island creek oysters Rockefeller with spinach, Pernod and fennel; or lobster on hand-made pansotti stuffed with butternut squash and toasted pumpkin-seed sauce. Primo's wines come mostly from Italy, Spain, and France. For a truly decadent dessert, try the caramelized banana cream Napoleon with vanilla rum cream and macadamia nut brittle. If you're in the mood for alfresco dining, ask for patio seating overlooking the golf course.

Leave it to the resorts of Lake Buena Vista to add celebrity panache to your fine dining experience. Todd English's bluezoo is a concept restaurant developed by chef Todd English, a frequent guest on the Food Network, "CBS This Morning," "The Today Show" and "Bobby Flay's Food Nation." Global coastal cuisines are prepared with the freshest seafood from the waters of the Atlantic seaboard, the Pacific Northwest and Prince Edward Island. Entrée choices might include miso-glazed Chilean sea bass, Cantonese lobster and yellowfin tuna steaks. The décor—from the aqua-blue lights illuminating metal art sculptures to the massive copper cones dangling over the raw bar—is as memorable as the exceptional service and the seafood creations.

A replica of a copper-domed Italian temple at the entrance to The Venetian Room hints at the Old World ambience you will find inside one of Orlando's most romantic restaurants. Intimate seating alcoves line the walls of the cozy dining room, which is richly appointed with dark mahogany, luxurious fabrics and elegant crystal chandeliers. Chef Khalid Benghallem, who was named one of the top 20 chefs in central Florida, blends Mediterranean and continental fare in such selections as pan-fried lump crab cake with mustard butter sauce, tarragon-scented Vidalia onion soup topped with a three-cheese gratin, muscovy duck salad drizzled with fig syrup, roasted squab in a grilled chippolini Madeira reduction, and, for dessert, passion-fruit Bavarian cream with mango frangipane and cassis sauce. The chef's artful culinary creations are well worth the price of a masterpiece.

Have you ever wanted to be treated like royalty? If so, reserve a table at Victoria & Albert's for one of the most elegant dining experiences you will ever have. Personalized service by attendants in formal attire sets the tone for a six-course prix fixe gourmet dinner served at a civilized pace

over the course of a 3-hour seating, in the Victorian tradition. Although the menu changes regularly, the chef's interpretations of contemporary American and international dishes are consistently superb. On being seated, guests receive a personalized menu with course options that servers are intimately familiar with. This is splurging at its grandest.

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

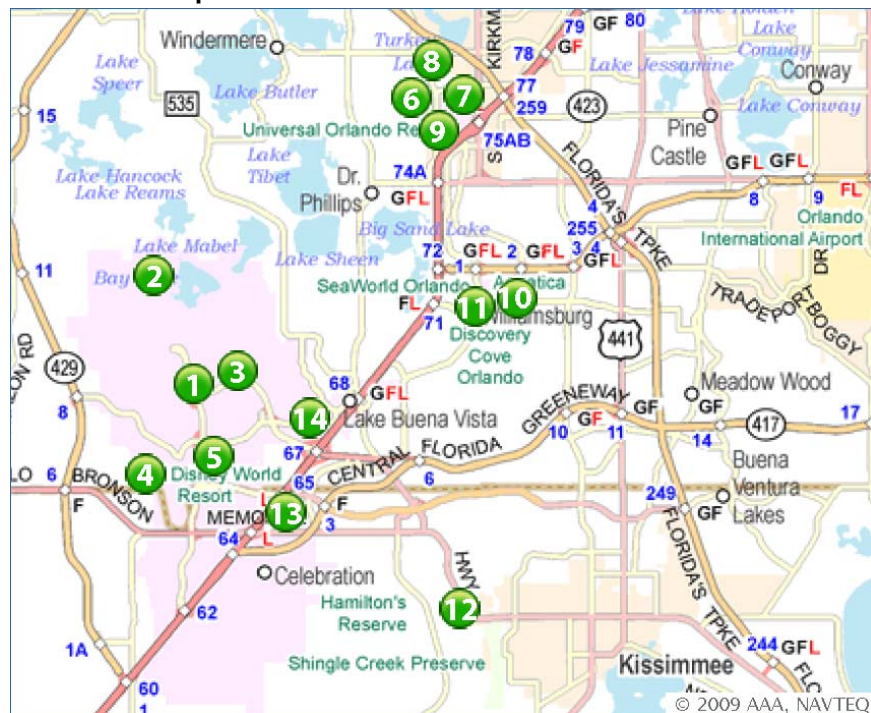
Without question, Walt Disney World Resort, a AAA GEM attraction, is the king of family entertainment in central Florida. Four large theme parks beckon, but first-timers and annual repeaters alike know that there is only one place to begin a visit to Disney's magical world—through the gates of Magic Kingdom Park, the original fantasyland. With Cinderella Castle as your landmark, branch off to seven different lands of enchantment—Adventureland, Frontierland, Tomorrowland...you get the idea. All the while you will meet roving, impeccably costumed and coiffed Disney characters eager to pose for snapshots.

The culmination of Walt Disney's vision, Epcot—Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow—imagines a utopian future and lays world cultures at your feet. Part science fair, part geography lesson and part travelogue, this park touts high technology through cutting-edge adventure rides such as Mission:SPACE, as close as you'll get to experiencing a real blast-off; Test Track, where car and rider prove their mettle; and Soarin', an aerial sightseeing tour of California as seen from a hang glider. The cadre of shops, restaurants and exhibits in World Showcase invites visitors on a global spending spree: Have a croissant in a French boulangerie, buy the kids a troll in Norway, and sample stout to the sounds of oompah music in Germany's Biergarten.

After you've circled the world and seen the future, plant your feet squarely on terra firma and explore the natural world in Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park. Like Cinderella Castle, this kingdom's centerpiece—The Tree of Life, a giant, artificial baobab tree carved with more than 300 animal images—commands the attention of all who enter. Step inside the

theater-size trunk to view the hilarious animated film "It's Tough to be a Bug!" The signature attraction here is Africa's Kilimanjaro Safaris, a 120-acre animal preserve that is toured safari-style, at the animals' pace.



Attractions Map



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With movie-inspired rides and shows, Disney's Hollywood Studios, the fourth of Walt Disney World Resort's theme parks, provides "reel" escapism in true Hollywood fashion. As you enter the park, take note of the real screams emanating from The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror. Building more nail-biting suspense than a Hitchcock thriller, this "elevator" ride lifts occupants 13 floors and scares the screams out of them as it plunges—seemingly out of control—to the ground, then rises and falls repeatedly. Lighthearted "Beauty and the Beast" - Live on Stage!

Attractions Details - *Get additional information on AAA.com*

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Walt Disney World® Resort

3111 World Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 824-4321



2. Magic Kingdom Park

3111 World Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 824-4321



3. Epcot

1580 Avenue of the Stars
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 824-4321



4. Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park

2901 Osceola Pkwy
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 824-4321



5. Disney's Hollywood Studios

50 Animation Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 824-4321



6. Universal Orlando® Resort

1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-8000



7. Universal CityWalk

6000 Universal Blvd
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-8000



8. Universal Studios

1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-8000



9. Universal's Islands of Adventure

1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando, FL 32819
Phone: (407) 363-8000



10. SeaWorld Orlando

7007 Sea World Dr
Orlando, FL 32821
Phone: (800) 327-2420



11. Discovery Cove Orlando

6000 Discovery Cove Way
Orlando, FL 32821
Phone: (877) 434-7268



12. Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament

4510 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy
Kissimmee, FL 34746
Phone: (407) 396-1518



13. Arabian Nights

3081 Arabian Nights Blvd
Kissimmee, FL 34747
Phone: (407) 239-9223

14. Downtown Disney Area

1780 Buena Vista Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Phone: (407) 934-7781

captures the essence of the animated film in a whimsical musical that will have you humming its catchy show tunes for days.

Universal Orlando Resort, a AAA GEM attraction, has two action-packed theme areas and Universal CityWalk, a vibrant, evening entertainment district. Universal Studios, the ultimate movie- and television-based experience, features rides that are equal parts exciting, exhilarating, frightening and fun. Try *Revenge of the Mummy*, *Men in Black Alien Attack*, *Terminator 2: 3-D* or *Shrek 4-D*.

Universal's Islands of Adventure has several theme areas, or islands. Ride along with Spider Man at *Marvel Super Hero Island*; walk through the pages of beloved storybooks at *Seuss Landing*; or escape from *Jurassic Park's* animatronic dinosaurs. And if all this does not thrill, take a spin on *Dueling Dragons*—twin inverted roller coasters that face off at 60 mph—or dare to participate in *Fear Factor Live*.

With nearly every activity centered on the sea and its inhabitants, the multidimensional marine adventure SeaWorld Orlando is every bit as entertaining as its mega-theme-park neighbors. Shamu and his podmates put on a dynamic display of killer-whale power, intelligence and slap-water humor, while a theater troupe of whales, dolphins, birds and humans team up to perform the *Blue Horizons* show. There's more splash than high-tech flash here, as it should be, and guests will likely get an education without even knowing it. Discovery Cove Orlando takes marinelife interaction to interpersonal levels with its dolphin encounters. If you've ever dreamed of hugging a sea mammal, this is the place for you. *SeaWorld* and *Discovery Cove* are AAA GEM attractions.

Elaborate dinner shows are Orlando's answer to "dinner and a movie." At these one-stop, family-night-out venues, both the meal and the live entertainment are grand in scale. The feast and the equestrian feats are bold at Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament and Arabian Nights, two more arena productions.

Although dinner is not on this show's menu of extravagant—and sometimes bizarre—production numbers, *Cirque du Soleil's La Nouba* deserves honorable mention in the category of one-of-a-kind entertainment. Defying description (but here goes, anyway), this

European-style circus features surrealistically dressed performers executing avant-garde dances and graceful acrobatics to original live music; in *Cirque* tradition, a story line weaves the vignette performances together. The theater is at Downtown Disney Area, Walt Disney World Resort's huge dining, shopping and entertainment complex. Besides Las Vegas, Orlando is the only city in the country with a resident *Cirque* troupe.

The country's most comprehensive, and indeed renowned, collection of works by an American designer-cum-artist resides in the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, a AAA GEM attraction in Winter Park. Exquisite stained glass pieces by Louis Comfort Tiffany grace open galleries and include windows, jewelry, lamps, objets d'art and the stunning chapel he created for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago; museum founders recovered the chapel from Tiffany's Long Island estate after a 1950s fire and later reassembled it here in its entirety.

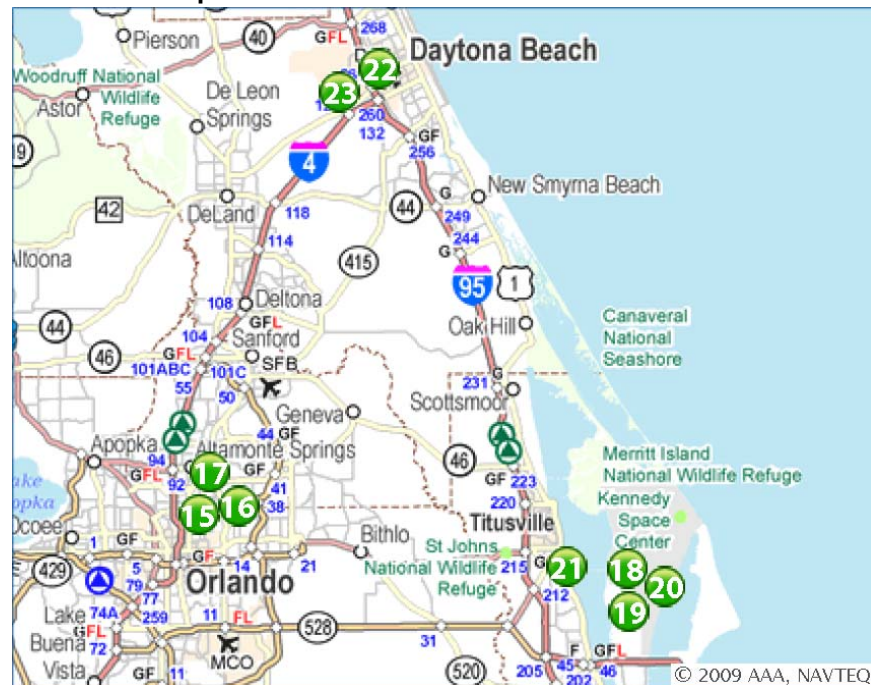
If the Morse piqued your interest in art, consider taking in Winter Park's Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens, with more than 200 installations on the sculptor's serene, lakeside retirement estate, or the Cornell Fine Arts Museum and its rich collection of American and European paintings; the Cornell is on the Rollins College campus.

Two of the central Florida's blockbuster attractions, both AAA GEMs, lie beyond Greater Orlando but are well within reach on the Atlantic Coast. Kennedy Space Center (KSC) is a working space facility and a showcase for achievements of the U.S. space program. Exciting exhibits, from real rockets to reels of space footage to an authentic piece of Mars, pack the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex and the *Apollo/Saturn V Center*. Bus tours pass the enormous *Vehicle Assembly Building* (the shuttle "garage") and stop at an observation gantry for a view of the launch pads. Astronauts Memorial Space Mirror, a sleek granite slab inscribed with the names of astronauts who died in service, moves with the sun to illuminate the names against its mirrored-sky surface, effectively—and quite poignantly—suspending the heroes' names in space. Through simulators at the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, guests can command a space shuttle, walk on the moon, experience G-force and, if the facility fulfilled its

mission, come to understand the human sacrifices made for space exploration. Visitors should note that Kennedy Space Center is not open to the public during shuttle launches, but entry for viewing a launch can be secured through advance ticketing.

A day at [Daytona 500 Experience](#), a AAA GEM attraction adjacent to [Daytona International Speedway](#) in Daytona Beach, is the perfect getaway for NASCAR racing enthusiasts. Motion simulators, spectacular IMAX race films, interactive stations and a history exhibit allow visitors to totally immerse themselves in the world of racing, while speedway tours put them right on the spot where legends of the sport roared into the record books.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Attractions Details - [Get additional information on AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

15. Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

445 N Park Ave
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 645-5311



16. Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens

633 Osceola Ave
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 647-6294



17. Cornell Fine Arts Museum

1000 Holt Ave
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 646-2526

18. Kennedy Space Center

Port Canaveral
Phone: (321) 449-4444,
(321) 454-4198

19. Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex

SR 405 & SR 3
Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899
Phone: (321) 449-4444



20. Astronauts Memorial Space Mirror

SR 405 & SR 3
Titusville, FL 32796
Phone: (321) 452-2887



21. U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame

6225 Vectorspace Blvd
Titusville, FL 32780
Phone: (321) 449-4444



22. Daytona 500 Experience

1801 W International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (386) 681-6800



23. Daytona International Speedway

1801 W International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: (800) 748-7467

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

Florida's long season of sunny days with mild temperatures sets the stage for outdoor art festivals. Nearly every city hosts a variation on this theme, with quality works ranging from juried fine art to superbly handcrafted jewelry to one-of-a-kind wearables. Four such AAA GEM events in the Orlando vicinity garner quite a following among both artists and attendees.

One of the largest and most anticipated annual shows is the [Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival](#), held in March along Park Avenue. The town's chic shops and lush Central Park make a picturesque setting for the mélange of exhibit tents, performance stages and food vendors. Be prepared to rub shoulders with up to 300,000 other art admirers; this event ranks consistently among the top art festivals in the nation.

In November, Walt Disney World Resort's [Festival of the Masters at Downtown Disney](#)® invites award-winning artists from across the country to show their works and compete for yet another honor. In true Disney fashion, standards are equally high for the entertainment, food and children's activities that complement this showing of “masterworks.” The festival is a AAA GEM event.

Early November brings the [Halifax Art Festival](#), a AAA GEM event, to [Daytona Beach](#). This visual arts affair with more than 250 exhibit stations and two entertainment stages takes place along Beach Street, which faces the Halifax River in the historic business district.

Multiple disciplines enrich the [Zora Neale Hurston Festival of Arts and Humanities](#), a AAA GEM event held in Eatonville in late January. African-American writer Zora Neale Hurston grew up in Eatonville, a community just north of Orlando that holds the distinction of being the nation's oldest incorporated black municipality. Renowned African-American musicians, vocalists, authors, educators and artisans celebrate Zora's legacy and Eatonville's heritage with this five-day precursor to Black History Month.

If you won't be in town during the GEM events, here are a few other art festivals you might catch: [Mount Dora Arts Festival](#), in downtown Mount Dora beside Lake Dora, in February; [Maitland Spring Festival of the Arts](#), next to Maitland's Lake Lily, in April; and [Spring Fiesta in the Park](#) and [Fall Fiesta in the Park](#), held in April and November, respectively, along the banks of downtown Orlando's Lake Eola. Are you getting the idea? Festivals by lakes add up to fun in the sun.

The performing arts thrive with the visual arts on Orlando's cultural agenda. In May the [Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival](#), a AAA GEM event, nurtures “outsider-artist” expressionism with 10 days of uncensored genre performances ranging from comedy improv to dramedy to musical cabaret. The name says it all. This is nontraditional theater at large.

Some of the sports world's most brilliant moments play out under the Florida sun. In February, Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach hosts the [Daytona 500](#). This AAA GEM event is the one NASCAR fans wait for all year, the culmination of Speedweeks, a series of races and festivities that primes drivers and fans for the big event revered as the Great American Race.

The [Bay Hill Invitational](#), a AAA GEM event, secures Orlando's slot on the PGA Tour in March. Golf's top contenders drive, putt and birdie their way across a challenging championship course at Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club and Lodge to bring in the lowest under-par score, as Tiger Woods did four years in a row starting in 1999.

Things to Do

Shopping

You might say Orlando is a shopper's paradise. You can buy mouse ears, T-shirts and, ironically enough, snow globes, to your heart's content in Orlando, but the city has so much more to offer both bargain hunters and lovers of luxury goods than just ordinary souvenirs. You just have to know where to find it all.

Antiques

Escape the sun and bustling theme parks with a leisurely amble through one of Orlando's antique districts. Wander in and out of air-conditioned emporiums in the North Orange Avenue Antiques District downtown, running south from the 2900 block to the 1600 block. Shops are packed to the rafters with one-of-a-kind finds; excavate for such relics as a 1930s RCA Victor radio, an 18th-century French buffet or vintage threads. Pop into Rock 'n' Roll Heaven, where they have a heck of a band (on vinyl and CDs, anyway); the selection of rare and collectible music ranges from Miles Davis and Elvis to The Mothers of Invention and Devo. Discover even more charming shops just down the street on Ivanhoe Row, along the 1200 block across from Lake Ivanhoe.

Several antiques dealers dot Edgewater Drive near Princeton Street less than 2 miles west in the College Park neighborhood, while ritzy Park Avenue, in Winter Park to the north, has a handful of antique shops where you may unearth that perfect Art Deco brooch or turn-of-the-20th-century Tiffany lamp.

Take a side trip to historic Mount Dora, a half-hour northwest of Orlando, and while away the day visiting its quaint antique shops. Rummage through the wares of the hundreds of dealers who gather each weekend at Renninger's Antique Market on SR 441, also in Mount Dora. Lovers of antiquities also can hunt for treasure at the antique boutiques on First Street in downtown Sanford.

Malls

Orlando is a mall rat's delight, and the crème de la crème is The Mall at Millenia, off I-4 at 4200 Conroy Rd. Feast your eyes on its upscale shops including Bloomingdale's, Chanel, Gucci, Neiman Marcus and Tiffany & Co., as well as more than 150 retailers, services and eateries. With its luxe design – intricate mosaic floors, leaping fountains, modern decor, sculptures and fashion shows broadcast on 35-foot-high LED screens – the mall is a sight to behold. Despite its opulent look, the mall also appeals to those without deep pockets with such mall standards as Banana Republic, Crate & Barrel, Express, Forever 21, Gap, Macy's and Urban Outfitters. Bonus: Orlando's first IKEA is next to the mall.

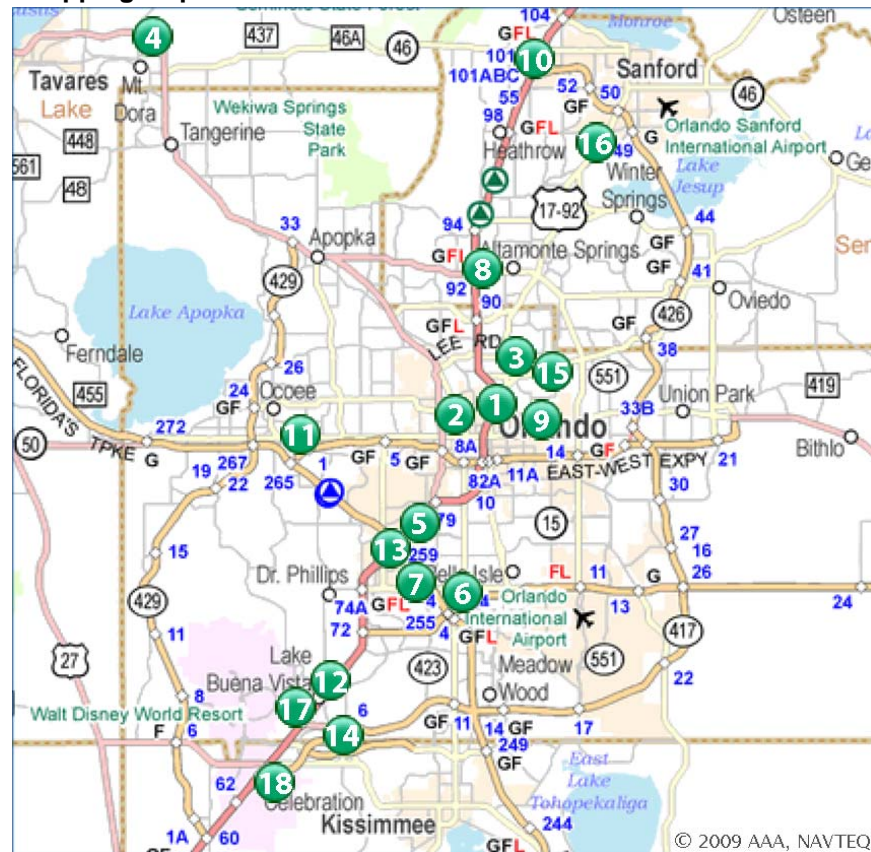
More than 250 shops occupy one of the largest malls in Florida. The Florida Mall, 8001 S. Orange Blossom Tr. in south Orlando, is anchored by major retailers Dillard's, JCPenney, Macy's, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue and Sears. International tourists arrive by the busful, joining the sea of shoppers who invade this mall regularly. There's also an attached hotel, so intrepid bargain hunters can drop bags off in their rooms and stay overnight.

Lure the men in your group to Festival Bay, a shopping and entertainment complex at 5250 International Dr., where they'll have a ball playing miniature golf on a glow-in-the-dark course, riding the course at Vans Skatepark, or hunting for gear at Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World and Ron Jon Surf Shop, just a few of the mall's 40 stores.

Not enough malls for you? Shop all you want; Orlando's got more. Each mall contains an assortment of heavyweight anchors such as Belk, Dillard's, JCPenney, Macy's and Sears; mall stalwarts including Aéropostale, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic and Gap; and food courts to provide fuel for more shopping. Take your pick from the following list.

Altamonte Mall, on 451 E. Altamonte Dr. in Altamonte Springs, offers 2 floors containing 175 boutiques. Northeast of downtown is Orlando Fashion Square, 3201 E. Colonial Dr.; it houses more than 165 shops. Sanford's Seminole Towne Center, 200 Towne Center Cir., is the northernmost of the malls, while west of downtown in Ocoee is West Oaks Mall at Clarke Road and SR 50; both have about 120 retailers.

Shopping Map







Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Outlets

International Drive is a mecca for bargain hunters and fashionistas. Souvenir shops abound, of course, especially in this part of Orlando, but the outlet stores are the true treasure troves. It's not a boast to say that whatever you're looking for, you'll find it at one of the outlet malls, and you'll save a bundle. From electronics to cookware, designer fashions to luggage, with such well-known brands as Bose, Calphalon, Gap, Le Creuset, Michael Kors, Nike, Nine West, Samsonite and Tommy Hilfiger, you won't be able to leave Orlando empty-handed.

Shopping Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

 - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. North Orange Avenue Antiques District
Orlando, FL</p> <p>2. College Park
College Park, FL</p> <p>3. Park Avenue in Winter Park
Winter Park, FL</p> <p>4. Mount Dora
Mount Dora, FL</p> <p>5. The Mall at Millenia
I-4 at 4200 Conroy Rd
Orlando, FL</p> <p>6. Florida Mall
8001 S. Orange Blossom Tr
Orlando, FL</p> <p>7. Festival Bay
5250 International Drive
Orlando, FL</p> <p></p> <p>8. Altamonte Mall
451 E. Altamonte Dr
Altamonte Springs, FL</p> <p>9. Fashion Square Mall
3201 E Colonial Dr
Orlando, FL 32803</p> <p>10. Sanford's Seminole Towne Ctr
200 Towne Center Circle
Sanford, FL 32771</p> | <p>11. West Oaks Mall
9401 West Colonial Drive, Ste 728
Ocoee, FL 34761</p> <p>12. Orlando Premium Outlets
8200 Vineland Avenue
Orlando, FL</p> <p></p> <p>13. Prime Outlets International
4951 International Drive
Orlando, FL</p> <p></p> <p>14. Lake Buena Vista Factory Stores
15657 SR 535
Lake Buena Vista, FL</p> <p></p> <p>15. Winter Park Farmer's Market
200 W. New England
Winter Park, FL</p> <p>16. Flea World
U4311 S Orlando Dr
Sanford, FL 32773</p> <p>17. Downtown Disney Marketplace
1780 Buena Vista Dr
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830</p> <p>18. Disney's Town of Celebration
Intersection of I-4 and US 192
Celebration, FL</p> |
|---|---|

Orlando Premium Outlets offer name brand and luxury brand shops in a Mediterranean village atmosphere at 8200 Vineland Ave., which connects International Drive and SR 535 (or off I-4 exit 68). The lineup of more than 130 outlet stores includes Banana Republic, Burberry, DKNY, Fendi, Nautica, Nike, Oilily, Polo Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger as well as the only Barneys New York outlet in central Florida. Covered outdoor walkways offer protection from the Florida sun. Amenities include parcel lockers and a currency exchange.

At 4951 International Dr. is Prime Outlets International, featuring apparel, electronics, fine jewelry, shoes, housewares and other items from more than 170 vendors; favorites include BCBG Max Azria, Betsey Johnson, Coach, Juicy Couture, Michael Kors, Movado, Neiman Marcus Last Call Clearance Center and Saks Fifth Avenue OFF 5th. Not your ordinary outlet mall, the center is an elegant outdoor marketplace with beautiful landscaping and Mediterranean styling.

Lake Buena Vista Factory Stores, 15657 SR 535, is a hidden jewel in the crown of Orlando outlets. With outlet shops such as Aéropostale, Borders, Gap, Old Navy, OshKosh B'Gosh and Van Heusen, you'll be loaded down with bags full of bargains galore.

Specialty Districts

Large malls and outlets aren't the only games in town— follow the lead of Orlandoans and check out the following independent and themed shopping districts.

Grab a sticky bun, a steaming cup of joe and a bag of locally grown tangerines at the Winter Park Farmer's Market; on Saturday mornings, locals make tracks to this refurbished train depot at 200 W. New England Ave. for the freshest produce, herbs, baked treats and cheeses.

One block east is Winter Park's heart and soul, Park Avenue. An eclectic assortment of upscale, preppy and trendy boutiques, galleries and bistros line this lengthy European-flavored street near Rollins College, perfect for shopping, people watching or just taking a stroll. Brick-paved alleys provide a taste of the old country with hidden courtyards and gardens. Running out of steam? Feed the squirrels while resting your weary dogs under a century-old oak in shady Central Park, or sip ice-cold chardonnay

at a sidewalk café. Speaking of dogs, bring yours or enjoy the parade as locals show off their purebreds; shop owners thoughtfully set out bowls of water for parched pups.

At Flea World, on US 17/92 in Sanford, merchants hawk everything from sneakers and faux designer sunglasses to designer puppies and corndogs in a carnival-like atmosphere. Amusement rides and circus acts entertain visitors on weekends.

Head to Downtown Disney Marketplace for the world's largest Disney character shop as well as exclusive Disneyana such as collectible pins and Mickey Mouse memorabilia. Learn a magic trick or observe artisans craft hand-blown glass right before your eyes in one of the boutiques that line the shores of Buena Vista Lagoon.

Farther south, near the intersection of I-4 and US 192, is Disney's Town of Celebration; its picturesque downtown comes complete with nearly two dozen shops and restaurants. Celebration evokes a turn-of-the-20th-century small town with Walt Disney touches: cobblestone streets, brightly-colored cafés and shops, art deco signs. Yet, you'll still find signs of the 21st century, including the requisite Starbucks.

Nightlife

Orlando's evening scene is all over the map, literally, but the greatest concentrations of hotspots are downtown and along I-Drive. For those who want a theme to go with their nightlife, the entertainment zone at Universal Orlando® Resort is packed with diverse nightspots. Here, clubbers can hop from one dance floor to another within a short distance.

Downtown

As the name suggests and the large fish tank on the first level confirms, a tropical theme prevails at Antigua, at 41 Church St. Expect a chic environment, techno music and the occasional celebrity sighting. Icon, 20 E. Central Blvd., gives off a similar vibe. The renovated old Beacham Theater, 46 N. Orange Ave., houses Tabu Nightclub, an upscale hot spot popular for its mix of hip-hop, high-energy and Top 40 tunes—and for its VIP clientele and celebrity performers.

Orange Avenue is the main strip for less-formal dance clubs that typically belt alternative, punk, funk, rock and indie music. Casually dressed twentysomethings frequent Independent Bar, 70 N. Orange Ave., and The Social, 54 N. Orange Ave. Daring types dance the night away to house music at Club Firestone, in the former Firestone Tire and Service Center at 578 N. Orange Ave.

International Drive

B.B. King's Blues Club at Pointe Orlando, 9101 International Dr., is one of the newest entrants in the competition for Orlando's late-night patronage. Two house bands play everything from blues to Motown to classic rock on an elevated stage right in the middle of this restaurant/nightclub. There's a dance floor, of course.

The music is varietal at this trendy club. Backstage, another of I-Drive's upscale nightspots, is tucked away in the Rosen Plaza Hotel at 9700 International Dr. Cool down in ICEBAR Orlando, where you'll pull on borrowed capes and gloves for a 45-minute adventure in a chilly setting made from carved ice.

For something a little different, have fun belting out pop tunes, commercial jingles, and songs you forgot you knew under the direction of dueling piano players at Howl at the Moon, in the 8800 block of I-Drive.

Universal CityWalk

Bustling crowds, bright lights and variety at a single location make this a popular choice for park visitors and locals. At the entrance to Universal Orlando Resort is Universal CityWalk, an eye-catching promenade of shops, restaurants and clubs. There's something here to satisfy any age group or music sensibility. Before you start your evening, inquire about opening times and cover charges at various restaurants and clubs. You can save a bundle by purchasing a CityWalk Party Pass at guest services.

Jump-start your evening with happy-hour mojitos or martinis at the Red Coconut Club. With its retro-style furnishings, banquette seating, conga drums, fake palm trees, velvet-roped VIP areas and intimate dance floor, this lounge-style dance club looks like an updated version of an early Vegas nightclub.

Reggae rules at Bob Marley-A Tribute to Freedom, which is housed in a replica of Marley's former home in Jamaica. Live music in the interior courtyard accompanies dinner or just drinks every evening. Speaking of courtyards, Pat O'Brien's, next door, is a carbon copy of the New Orleans landmark, right down to the meticulously re-created carriageway entrance with arched rifles overhead. The main bar exudes the character of a vintage New Orleans neighborhood watering hole, while a secluded patio surrounded by worn brick walls features faithful appointments such as slate floors, ironwork fencing, huge planters of greenery and the famous flaming fountain. Pianos duel it out in the club's raucous third bar. The signature Hurricane drink, served in a souvenir glass, looks like punch and really packs one. You've been warned.

Several wildly decorated intimate lounges offer retreats from the pounding beat on the dance floor at the groove, where DJs play everything from '70s and '80s standards to alternative rock nightly. Food, live music and dance styles from salsa to merengue illuminate the cultures of Latin American countries at the Latin Quarter. Hot happens here, so have dinner and stay for the district's ultimate nightclub experience.

And when your dancing machine runs out of steam, decide if you want to be the entertainment at CityWalk's Rising Star. This innovative karaoke club rewards daring performers with a live band and backup singers. There's nothing cliché about the district's newest nightspot.

Spectator Sports

From downtown Orlando to Walt Disney World Resort, fans have several venues to choose from when it comes to the city's various professional sports offerings. Orlando's premier sports arena, Amway Arena, 600 W. Amelia St., hosts arena football, basketball and hockey games.

Baseball

Disney's Wide World of Sports® Complex, Osceola Parkway and Victory Way, is the spring training home of the Atlanta Braves. For game schedules and ticket information phone (407) 939-1500.

Osceola County Stadium, 1000 Bill Beck Blvd. in Kissimmee, is the site of the Houston Astros spring training camp.

Basketball

Orlando basketball enthusiasts root for their home team, the NBA's Orlando Magic. Fans can attend games at Amway Arena. The city's two colleges also have basketball teams. For schedule and ticket information phone the Orlando Magic, (407) 896-2442; Rollins College, (407) 646-2000, in Winter Park; and the University of Central Florida Arena, (407) 823-3070, in Orlando.

Football

The Florida Citrus Bowl hosts college football games, including the annual Capital One Bowl and the Champs Sports Bowl.

Greyhound Racing

Dog racing is a year-round diversion. Sanford-Orlando Kennel Club, (407) 831-1600, at 301 Dog Track Rd. in Longwood, holds matinee and evening races.

Note: Policies concerning admittance of children to pari-mutuel betting facilities vary. Phone for information.

Recreation

Lengthy summers and mild winters create ideal recreation conditions in central Florida year-round, and locals make the most of it. The area's many waterways host a wide variety of activities, and drier pastimes abound as well. Phone the Orange County Parks & Recreation Department 24-Hour Parks InfoLine, (407) 836-6280, for more information.

Bicycling

Bicycling is growing in popularity in Orlando and in December 2000 was designated a bicycle friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists. However, traffic is always a concern. Exercise caution and obey all traffic laws when bicycling on the street. If possible, ride in a park—both Turkey Lake and Lake Underhill parks offer trails—or other specially designated area. Locals enjoy the Cady Way Trail, running 3.5

miles from the Fashion Square Mall on SR 50 to Cady Way in Winter Park, as well as the quiet, tree-lined streets of Rollins College, College Park and downtown Orlando. The Walt Disney World Resort offers a variety of trails as well as bicycle rentals.

Fishing

With hundreds of lakes and several rivers to choose from, anglers will have no problem finding a place to cast their lines—bass, bream and catfish are among the available catches. Some favorite spots are Gaston Edwards Park on Lake Ivanhoe near downtown; Lake Fairview, north of College Park; Lake Underhill Park, east of town off Conway Road; Lake Cane/Marsha Park and Turkey Lake Park, both just off Conroy-Windermere Rd.; Wekiwa Springs State Park, on SR 435 in northwest Orange County; and Lake Tohopekaliga in Kissimmee, south of US 192. The Walt Disney World complex also affords angling opportunities for tourists and residents alike. A freshwater license is required for those age 16 or older; phone Fisheries Management, (407) 846-5300, for additional details.

Deep-sea fishing is a popular pastime, and charters are available in many beachfront towns. Anglers age 16 and over must purchase saltwater licenses, which are available at many bait and tackle shops, most Wal-Marts and Bass Pro Shops and at all tax assessors' offices. For further information phone the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, (850) 488-6058.

Golf

Golf is a way of life for many Orlando residents; an abundance of courses—more than 175—grace the metropolitan area, from the city-bound links of small municipal properties to the spectacular settings of the luxury resorts. All of the following courses offer at least 18 holes and are open to the public year round: Casselberry Golf Club, (407) 699-9310, 300 S. Triplet Lake Dr.; Celebration Golf Club, (407) 566-4653, 701 Golf Park Dr.; Dubsdread, (407) 246-2551, 549 W. Par St.; Eastwood Golf Club, (407) 281-4653, 13950 Golfway Blvd.; Hunter's Creek, (407) 240-4653, 14401 Sports Club Way; Mayfair Country Club, (407) 322-2531, in Sanford; MetroWest Country Club, (407) 299-1099, 2100 S. Hiwassee Rd.; Stoneybrook Orlando, (407) 384-6888, 2900

Northampton Ave.; Walt Disney World Golf Complex, (407) 939-4653, in Lake Buena Vista; and Wedgefield Golf and Country Club, (407) 568-2116, 20550 Maxim Pkwy.

Hot Air Ballooning

Bob's Balloon Charters, (407) 466-6380, Magic Sunrise Ballooning, (866) 606-7433, and Orlando Balloon Rides, (407) 894-5040, offer aerial views of the Orlando area via hot air balloons. Some scenic trips include breakfast and champagne.

Jogging and Walking

Orlando also boasts two scenic, paved recreation trails built on old railway beds. Both provide opportunities for walking and jogging. The 22.5-mile West Orange Trail runs between the Lake/Orange county line through abandoned orange groves to Apopka. For information contact the Orange County Parks and Recreation Department at (407) 654-1108. Closer to downtown Orlando, the 3.5-mile Cady Way Trail connects Winter Park to Fashion Square Mall. For information contact the Transportation Planning Bureau (407) 246-2775.

One can walk or jog just about anywhere in central Florida, but the following spots are exceptionally nice. Downtown Orlando features Lake Eola, noted for Centennial Fountain, as well as Langford Park on Central Boulevard. Just outside downtown are College Park's charming streets and the serene oasis of Lake Ivanhoe's Gaston Edwards Park. Winter Park is a good place for a stroll, particularly along popular Park Avenue or on the Rollins College campus. Other appealing sites include Mead Gardens and Kraft Azalea Gardens and Park in Winter Park as well as Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando. Due to the relentless Florida sun, early morning and late afternoon are the best times for either activity.

Tennis

Tennis courts are nearly as numerous as lakes in metropolitan Orlando, with more than 800 throughout the area. Many hotels offer court privileges to their guests. The courts at county parks are always open to the general public; for further details phone the City of Orlando Recreation Bureau, (407) 246-2288, or the Orange County Parks and Recreation Department, (407) 836-6200. Some resorts offer public access, including Cypress Creek Country Club at 5353 S. Vineland Rd.,

(407) 351-2187; the Grand Cypress Racquet Club, 55 Grand Cypress Blvd., (407) 239-1944; and Kissimmee's Poinciana Golf & Racquet Resort, 500 E. Cypress Pkwy., (407) 933-5300.

Water Sports

The abundance of lakes in central Florida—more than 2,000 by some counts—provides endless opportunities for water sports of all kinds, including boating, canoeing, swimming, water skiing and windsurfing. Some of the most popular sites include Lake Ivanhoe; Lake Underhill; and the Butler Chain of Lakes and Winter Park Chain of Lakes. For information about the Butler Chain of Lakes contact the Orange County Parks and Recreation Department at (407) 246-2238; for information about the Winter Park Chain of Lakes, phone (407) 599-3334; or phone the City of Orlando Aquatics Department at (407) 246-2288.

Just north of Orlando near Apopka is Wekiwa Springs State Park, where swimming in the crystal clear spring water is popular. The Wekiva River is considered one of the state's best canoeing rivers; canoe rental information is available at the marina, (407) 884-2008.

Boating is a favorite recreation; residents have their choice of several inland waterways to explore. The Butler and Winter Park Chain of Lakes are groupings of connected lakes. The Rollins College campus and beautiful homes line the shores of the lakes in Winter Park's chain, and boat tours are available. Another active waterway, the St. Johns River, connects nearby Sanford with Jacksonville and boat tours are available. Houseboats can be rented on a daily basis in DeLand, allowing visitors to navigate the river in style.

Performing Arts

The strength of Orlando's appeal lies mainly with its family-oriented attractions and entertainment. While this is good news for the folks at Disney and Universal, it has detracted some focus from the city's cultural scene. Arts enthusiasts need not despair, though—local arts groups have begun to expand their presence. Theater offers the most varied slate, with dance and music filling in the gaps. As the film industry gains a foothold in the area, it is likely that the fine arts will enjoy even greater success, attracting new artists to practice their crafts in the City Beautiful.

Dance

The Central Florida Ballet and the Orlando Ballet are the city's professional dance companies. The season, which lasts from September to May, features concerts and programs ranging from classical to modern. The troupe also stages the Nutcracker ballet every Christmas, accompanied by a live orchestra of local musicians. Performances generally are held at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre; for information phone (407) 426-1733.

Rollins College brings in some of the dance world's brightest stars, including the Alvin Ailey Repertory and Pilobolus, to the Annie Russell Theatre to supplement the Rollins Dance student program; phone (407) 646-2145.

Film

Alternative cinema finds a home at the Enzian Theater, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., offering filmgoers a varied menu of critically acclaimed American independent and foreign films. The Enzian also produces the annual Florida Film Festival. The theater itself is unusual—it is set in an old house, with audience seating at tables rather than in an auditorium. For information phone (407) 629-1088.

Music

Despite lacking a full-time professional orchestra, Orlando does have a variety of groups dedicated to making beautiful music. The Orlando Philharmonic gives three concert series during the year. Performances are held at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre; the Orlando Museum of Art, 2416 N. Mills Ave., in Loch Haven Park; and the John and Rita Lowndes Shakespeare Center, in Loch Haven Park behind the Orlando Museum of Art; for additional information phone (407) 896-9920. The Festival of Orchestras, (407) 539-0245, imports full-size symphonies, featuring such esteemed groups as the Cleveland Orchestra; guests also play at the Bob Carr.

A favorite local event is the Bach Festival, a celebration of masterworks by Bach and other major composers. Held in late February or early March, the program is performed by the Bach Festival Choir and Orchestra, which also offers the Festival Concert Series from October

through April. The group performs at the Knowles Memorial Chapel at Rollins College; phone (407) 646-2115.

Theater

One of the area's most popular theaters for families is the Orlando Repertory Theatre, 1001 Princeton St., (407) 896-7365. Another local favorite is the SunTrust Broadway in Orlando series, sponsoring touring Broadway shows at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre. Tickets for the biggest hits often require several weeks' notice; phone (800) 448-6322. The Mad Cow Theatre, (407) 297-8788, 105 S. Magnolia Ave., and Theatre Downtown, (407) 841-0083, just north of the city center at 2113 N. Orange Ave., offer avant-garde and mainstream works. The Orlando Theatre Project, (407) 491-1397, puts on a similar mix at Seminole Community College's Fine Arts Theatre, 100 Weldon Blvd. in Sanford.

The play's the thing at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater, in partnership with UCF, which is dedicated to staging the bard's timeless plays in innovative ways. A festival is held each April at the Walt Disney Amphitheater at Lake Eola Park; phone (407) 447-1700. The organization produces additional works throughout the year, from classically inspired independent pieces to the PlayLab Series, a selection of experimental plays, presented at the John and Rita Lowndes Shakespeare Center at Loch Haven Park, 812 E. Rollins St.

The University of Central Florida features a full season of performances through UCF Conservatory Theatre, (407) 823-1500. Rollins College also mounts a full season, with four productions at the Annie Russell Theatre running the gamut of theatrical genres; phone (407) 646-2145.

Insider Info

Disney Tickets

Disney's Magic Kingdom Park, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park open daily generally at 9. Closing times vary between each park, depending on the season. Large crowds and long lines are to be expected, especially during holiday periods. Individual park maps are available at Guest Relations Information Centers near the entrance of each park.

Parking and Pets

The entrance road leads to parking (fee \$12 per day at the four theme parks). Free tram service connects the parking area with the Ticket and Transportation Center, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park. Transportation also is available to all guest areas. Kennels—at Magic Kingdom Park (Ticket and Transportation Center), Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park and Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground—charge a nominal fee to care for and feed pets.

Admissions

"Magic Your Way," Walt Disney World Resort's ticket pricing structure, allows visitors to customize their stay at Disney's theme parks, attractions and entertainment areas based on their interests and the length of their visit. To compute their ticket price, guests first determine the base ticket price, which varies depending on the number of days they plan on spending at the resort. They then choose from a list of options, all available as add-on prices, that enable them to tailor their stay to their own needs.

Magic Your Way Base Ticket, the starter pass, provides admission to one theme park for each day purchased. Guests can visit Magic Kingdom Park or Epcot or Disney's Hollywood Studios or Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park. One-day ticket \$79; \$68 (ages 3-9). Two-day ticket \$156; \$133 (ages 3-9). Three-day ticket \$219; \$187 (ages 3-9). Four-day ticket \$225; \$192 (ages 3-9). Five-day ticket \$228; \$195 (ages 3-9). Six-day ticket \$231; \$198 (ages 3-9). Seven-day ticket \$234; \$201 (ages 3-9).

Park Hopper® Option allows guests to visit more than one theme park on the same day, any combination of parks in a day. The add-on price is \$52 whether the ticket is 1 or 7 days.

Water Park Fun & More Option offers visitors the chance to experience other Disney attractions and entertainment areas. A specified number of visits (between two and seven) can be made, based on the length of the ticket purchased. Choices are DisneyQuest Indoor Interactive Theme Park, Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park, Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park, Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex and a round of golf

at Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course. The add-on price is \$52, whether the ticket is 1 day or 7 days.

No Expiration Option, when added on to the ticket, means unused admission days never expire and can be used at some future date. This option is available on multiday tickets. Two-day add-on price \$18; 3-day, \$24; 4-day, \$52; 5-day, \$73; 6-day, \$84; 7-day, \$115. Select tickets are available at participating AAA Travel offices.

Tickets are valid during regular hours and include unlimited use of the Walt Disney World transportation system. All tickets expire 14 days from first use, unless the No Expiration option has been selected. No refunds for unused tickets are issued for any reason. Tickets are non-transferable. Some activities or events may be separately priced. All prices quoted do not include tax. Prices and entitlements may change without notice. AX, DC, DS, JC, MC, VI. For ticket information phone (407)824-4321 or TTY 407-827-5141.

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