

# Adventures by Lori's UNIVERSAL TIPS

## *Parks - Know Before You Go*



### Early Park Admission

If you are staying on-site, Early Park Admission will get you into Islands of Adventure, Universal Studios, or Volcano Bay one hour prior to general park opening. Usually this early park admission is at 8am, with general park opening at 9am. **Attractions that are open for you at that time are Forbidden Journey (Islands) and Escape to Gringotts (Studios) and Revenge of the Mummy (Studios).** Ride those early in the morning and then use your Express Pass (if you have it) for later in the day for a second ride.

### Universal Orlando Resort App

Make sure to download Universal's app before you arrive! You can scan your tickets into the app and set up your payment type for mobile ordering.

Because everything is paperless now, everything you need will be in the app: park maps, menus, meal payment. You can also join virtual queues for two rides at Universal: Hagrid's ride (Islands of Adventure) and Jimmy Fallon (Universal Studios).

### Text your questions!

If you have any questions before or during your travels, you can text a Universal representative instantly at 32281.

### Ticket Lanyard

Bring or purchase a lanyard for your tickets and room keys, which are your Express Passes. You will need to scan that Express Pass at every attraction! If you don't have one, Universal sells themed lanyards for \$12.

### Lockers

Don't forget to put your bags in a locker for many of the rides (Forbidden Journey, Hulk, Rip Ride, Mummy, Men in Black, and Dragon Challenge). They do not allow you to put your bags in a pouch like Disney does. If you carry your bag through the line, you will not be allowed to ride. You will have to walk all the way back to the entrance to stow your bag.

The lockers are operated by a touch screen located in each bank of lockers. **You can stow your bags for free as long as you take them out once you exit the ride.** This can be confusing because there is a price scale for the lockers on the screen when you first see it. Just press "rent a locker," and it will tell you to place your finger on the light to be scanned. It will then tell you what locker to open. You can find your locker by the blinking green light if you can find the number easily. You won't be charged unless you leave your belongings in a locker after you ride.

The lockers are small, about 5 inches high. A normal backpack will not fit in them. They have larger lockers you can rent for \$2 a ride if needed.

Don't forget your locker number! You will need the number and your finger scan to get your bag back out.

Don't use the lockers right in front. Lines usually form at the first bank of lockers, but you can often move down the line or around the corner to find an open touch screen. You will get in and out much faster.

## Motion Sickness

If you tend to get motion sick, Universal would be a place you would want to prepare ahead of time for with a little Dramamine. Take one NON-DROWSY formula at least an hour prior to riding any rides.

## Water Rides

Lockers are NOT free at the water rides. It's a good idea to stick an extra Ziploc baggie in your things in case you ride the Popeye barges, the Dudley Do Right Ripsaw Falls, or Jurassic Park River Adventure. Lockers cost money there and your phone/camera/iPod will get wet. You can go into any shop and ask for a bag to store your things as well, if you don't have one with you.

## Best Times

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is busiest between 11am to 3pm. This is the best time to visit the other parts of the park. Spider-man is great, Hulk is great, but if you are like me, you might be as green as the Hulk when you get off it.

## Getting Between Parks: Hogwarts Express

If you don't have a Park-to-Park ticket, you CANNOT ride Hogwarts Express.

## Dining Reservations

You can make dining reservations 60 days in advance at [www.OpenTable.com](http://www.OpenTable.com). Find what restaurants are available at <https://www.universalorlando.com/web/en/us/plan-your-visit/dining-experiences/reservations>.

## Islands of Adventure

### Cat in the Hat

Fun from a kids' perspective, but deceptively motion sickness prone – lots of twisting and turning.

### One Fish, Two Fish

This is Universal's equivalent to the Flying Dumbos at Disney – this line is incredibly LONG. If you are going to do this with your kids, do it EARLY.

### Feivel's Playard

In Universal Studios, this is a great place for kids to let loose and run around for a while. There is a lot of water here with fountains and buckets of water falling. You may want to bring a change of clothes for the kids or bring their swimsuits for a little water play.

### VelociCoaster

This ride is not included with Express Pass, so you'll want to do this with your Early Park Admission. There may be a virtual queue you can enter, you'll need to check the app to confirm for your travel dates. If so, join the queue as soon as possible!

## Wizarding World of Harry Potter | *Hogsmead (Islands of Adventure)*

I probably don't need to tell you this, but you should high-tail it over to this section of the Islands of Adventure immediately upon entering the park. This gets to be standing room only as the day advances. When you enter, stay to the right, you will go through a little shopping area, and keep traveling right. If you are leading the crowd and not following it, you will go through Seuss Landing and The Lost Continent and keep following it around until you get to Harry Potter. You will see it as you come to it.

## Butterbeer

You will see a giant barrel for butterbeer on the street. The lines for this will gain length as the day goes on. Rather than stand in line for that, you can go just a few steps into the Three Broomsticks and get your butterbeer and your souvenir cup in there – with usually little or not wait at all. Let the others stand in line, you don't have to! It's kind of expensive (\$6.99 cold, frozen, or hot) but worth it!

You can also get a souvenir cup at the Leaky Cauldron at Universal Studios.

## Flight of the Hippogriff

Don't do this unless the line is less than 10 minutes. It's not worth it.

## Forbidden Journey

You can use Express Pass for this ride now! You can always go back and tour the castle without doing the ride and without the line. Actually a wait of 45 minutes or less is not bad because the castle has so much to look at.

They take your picture in the Forbidden Journey ride and then project it into "mist" later on in the ride. Look for it.

## Honeydukes

If you get into Honeydukes to purchase candy, you can pay for it in the attached toy shop to avoid the long lines.

## Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure

If you are a Harry Potter fan, Hagrid's ride is a must! It is not currently included in Express Pass, so we recommend riding during your Early Park Admission! There may be a virtual queue for this ride, but you'll need to check the Universal app to confirm for your dates. If it is available, join the queue as soon as you can!

## Olivander's Wand Shop

This ALWAYS has a line no matter when you get to the park. You can expect a wait time of 30-40 minutes for a 10 minutes presentation, but it's worth it! **There is a second Olivander's Wand Shop in Universal Studios which I think has a better story and experience.**

## Owl Post

Look for the owls in the rafters outside the Owl Post.

## Photo Ops!

Have your camera ready to snap a picture with the Hogwarts Express and the conductor. Also, get your pictures early in the morning before it gets to be wall-to-wall people.

## Shopping

The shops are always busy, but the earlier you go in the day, the better. Each shop has different items, so you'll want to explore them all!

## Shows

They will do a few "cute" shows during the day. They do a Triwizard demonstration and then a Hogwarts choir that start at 11am and run throughout the day. They do them opposite the Forbidden Journey entrance (you will recognize the area). If you're there 2-5 minutes before the hour or half hour, you'll have front row seats (on the ground). They don't advertise the times, so no one knows when they happen.

# Wizarding World of Harry Potter | *Diagon Alley (Universal Studios)*

## Azkaban Merchandise

By the Azkaban merchandise, there is a vanishing cabinet with a bird inside that chirps!

## Butterbeer

There are three places to get Butterbeer in Diagon Alley: The Leaky Cauldron, the drink shop by the show stage, and by the entrance to Knockturn Alley. The Leaky Cauldron has a cooler souvenir drink cup.

## Diagon Alley Entrance

At the entrance to Diagon Alley, you will see The Knight Bus. This is interactive and fun so don't just walk past it. It's also a great place to get your photo taken!

## Escape from Gringotts

Ride Gringotts either early in the morning or later in the afternoon, not midday. **You will need to stow your bags in the lockers for this ride.** This is a 3D roller coaster and is very unique!

## Gringotts Dragon

Be sure to watch the dragon on top of Gringotts at night when it's dark.

## Gringotts Exchange Store

In this store, you can interact with the goblin. You can ask him questions. You can also purchase wizard currency for your collection.

## Ice Cream Shop

The ice cream shop has many unique flavors "suited to fit a wizard's pallet" including chocolate chili, Earl Gray & Lavender, Sticky Toffee Pudding, Butterbeer, as well as some traditional flavors. They do not give samples.

## Interactive Wands

You can purchase an interactive wand from Olivander's (best place) with a show and also if you don't want to wait in that line, you can get one at Gregorovitch's, but there is less stock there. With this wand, you will get a Marauder's Map of both parks with 20 spells you can do in Universal Studios and 9 in Hogsmeade of Islands of Adventure. There are also some secret ones that you can get online.

Check out this YouTube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0OvRZOFmPs>. This wand is about \$50, and one family can share one wand.

## Knockturn Alley

In Knockturn Alley, ask a team member about the doll in the glass cabinet and watch out for the hand in that same area. Above the hand you can find the cursed necklace from the Half Blood Prince!

## Leaky Cauldron

Be sure to peak in the Leaky Cauldron even if you don't eat there. It serves typical British food (bangers and mash, etc).

## Moving Pictures

There is a studio at the back end of Weasley's (or you can go to the other side of the store and enter) where you can be in a moving picture. You can either purchase a DVD with all your scenes or you can just see yourself in 3 scenes if you don't want to purchase.

## Pet Shop

In the pet shop, you can find a snake that will speak parsel-tongue.

## Phone Booth

There is a phone booth in "London." Go in and dial #62442 on the rotary phone. This will get you to the Ministry of Magic.

## Robe Fitting Surprise!

Go in the robe store, try on the robes, and look in the mirror for a fun surprise!

## Shows

There are two shows on stage. Both are great. The first is the Tales of Beedle the Bard which re-enacts the Deathly Hollow story, and the second is a jazz performance by Celestina Warbeck and the Banshees. Both are located on the stage in the back section of Carkitt Market. Shows are subject to change. Refer to your app for the current showtimes.

## Shutterbuttons *(you want to do this!)*

In Diagon Alley, there is a photo studio called Shutterbuttons, and you can ask for a photo session with them. Even if you don't end up purchasing the digital copy of the photos, it's still a fun experience!

If you purchase the photo package, a digital copy from Shutterbuttons comes included. If you are interested in that package, we can add it for you!