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<<Orlando.doc>>

ORLANDO City Profile

Must See or Do

Sights—The Magic Kingdom and MGM Studios in Walt Disney World, Shamu the killer whale in SeaWorld, Islands of Adventure's thrill rides in Universal Orlando.

Museums—Orlando Museum of Art, Morse Museum of American Art, Mennello Museum of American Folk Art, the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College.

Memorable Meals—Homemade pastas at Alfredo's in Epcot, Asian spiced lamb at Manuel's, duck with strawberries and pistachios at Pebble's.

Late Night—The neon-flooded Downtown Disney complex, CityWalk at Universal Orlando, the Pointe Orlando entertainment and shopping complex near International Drive.

Walks—Taking a leisurely 1-m/1.6-km walk around Lake Eola Park, hiking the linked trails at Wekiva Springs State Park, strolling the upscale shops along Park Avenue in Winter Park.

Especially for Kids—SeaWorld, Universal Orlando, Walt Disney World, Wet 'n' Wild (one of the biggest water parks in the world), Gatorland, the Orlando Science Center, Orange County's expanding system of bicycle trails, Wonder Works.

Advisories

PERSONAL SAFETY

At night, avoid the downtown area around Parramore Street. South Orange Blossom Trail is the closest thing Orlando has to a red-light district; it has no major stores or attractions, and currently the city is aggressively cleaning it up. However, take the usual precautions, such as locking car doors. Check with your hotel's concierge or the front desk before visiting unfamiliar areas of the city.

Sightseeing

that bring visitors to Orlando are getting larger all the time: Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando and SeaWorld seem to be in a mad dash to out-build each other, although Disney appears to be winning the race. Each year sees the addition of major new attractions.

If you really want to get a sense of what Orlando is about, however, find a little time to escape the strong gravitational pull of the theme parks. Most people bypass the city itself, but downtown Orlando is developing some attractions of its own. The modern Orlando Science Center, which is topped by a striking aluminum-domed observatory, has interactive exhibits that appeal to kids of all ages. You can unwind at Lake Eola Park, a scenic oasis in the midst of downtown's shops, restaurants and nightlife.

Explore a few of Orlando's outlying areas, which contain some quieter forms of enjoyment, including gardens and museums. Make sure to see the Morse Museum of American Art, with some rare works by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The collection at the Orlando Museum of Art is also well worth a stop. It will surprise those who think only older cities can offer serious collections.

MUSEUM

Albin Polasek Foundation—You could easily miss this museum because it sits in a row of large homes on a heavily trafficked thoroughfare. But inside you'll find a museum, gallery and gardens honoring this famous sculptor of the 1920s, '30s and '40s. His retirement home is adjacent to the museum, and much of his work is on display there. Group tours are conducted. Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-noon and 1-4 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm. Closed July and August. Free. 633 Osceola Ave., Winter Park (15 minutes from downtown Orlando). Phone 407-647-6294.

Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College—This museum specializes in Renaissance and contemporary art. More than 6,000 artifacts, paintings and sculptures are accessible in three galleries. After viewing the art, step across the street for a stroll on Park Avenue. Tuesday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 1-5 pm. Donations suggested. 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park (15 minutes from downtown Orlando). Phone 407-646-2526.

Morse Museum of American Art—The rarest personal works of Louis Comfort Tiffany are the centerpiece of this collection. However, the museum's permanent collection also contains works by Hopper, Sargent and Samuel F. B. Morse—cousin of Charles Hosmer Morse, for whom the museum was named, and inventor of the Morse code. Tuesday-Saturday 9:30 am-4 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm. US\$3 adults. 445 Park Ave. N., Winter Park (15 minutes from downtown Orlando). Phone 407-645-5311.

Orlando Museum of Art—This museum has been enhanced by a multimillion-dollar expansion. Among works by nationally and world-renowned artists are landscapes by Georgia O'Keeffe, Herman Herzog, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran and Charles Sheeler. Tuesday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. US\$4 adults. 2416 N. Mills Ave., Loch Haven Park (five minutes north of downtown Orlando). Phone 407-896-4231.

Orlando Science Center—Hands-on exhibits are the main attraction at this 207,000-sq-ft/19,230-sq-m downtown museum. TechWorks allows visitors to create imaginary landscapes using computers and models while NatureWorks has a recreation of Florida's ecosystems. Explore the solar system using the observatory's custom-built telescope. The center also shows large-screen nature and science films. Tuesday-Thursday 9 am-5 pm, Friday and Saturday 9 am-9 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Closed Monday September-May. (The observatory is open Friday 7-9 pm and Saturday 6-9 pm.) US\$9.50 adults. 777 E. Princeton St. Phone 407-514-2000. Toll-free 888-672-4386.

PARKS AND GARDENS

A World of Orchids—The world's largest permanent indoor exhibit of flowering orchids. Thousands of species and hybrids grow in this tropical setting. Open Tuesday-Sunday 9:30 am-4:30 pm. Free. About 30 minutes from downtown: Take I-4 west from Orlando, exit at 25B and follow Highway 192 West. Turn left at Old Lake Wilson Road. 2501 Old Lake Wilson Rd., Kissimmee. Phone 407-396-1887.

Harry P. Leu Gardens—Dozens of acres of blooms and an orchid conservatory. Tours of the museum and gardens are scheduled daily. This is a popular site for weddings. Open daily 9 am-5 pm. US\$4 adults. 1920 N. Forest Ave. (The gardens are located a few miles from downtown, and we suggest that you call for directions.) Phone 407-246-2620.

Lake Eola Park—Orlando's focal point and a popular picnic spot, it's often used by walkers and joggers who enjoy circling the lake. Concession stands are open year-round 10 am-7 pm. Swan-shaped paddleboats are available for rental. Downtown at Rosalind and Central Streets. For more information, call 407-246-2827.

Wekiva Springs State Park—This lovely park has plenty of places to hike, fish, camp and swim (keeping in mind that the water stays at a cool 72 F/22 C). Canoeing is popular, and rentals are available. Daily 8 am-dusk. US\$4 per vehicle with up to eight people. 1800 Wekiva Circle, about 20 minutes northwest of Orlando in Apopka. Phone 407-884-2009.

THEME AND AMUSEMENT PARKS

SeaWorld Orlando—This park has traditionally drawn visitors more interested in sea animals than in action rides. But the park has begun broadening its attractions. It recently introduced Discovery Cove, where visitors can interact with animals. The park has also added several thrill rides, including Journey to Atlantis, which takes you to the lost city through high-tech effects and waterfalls, and Kraken, a roller coaster that SeaWorld claims is Orlando's fastest. Even with the new attractions, Shamu remains SeaWorld's headlining killer whale. Other popular shows and walk-through attractions feature manatees, dolphins, sea lions and walrus, penguins, polar bears and, for landlubbers, Anheuser-Busch's Clydesdale horses (the brewery owns the park). Daily 9 am-7 pm, with extended hours during summer and holidays. US\$47.95 adults. (A separate ticket can be purchased for Discovery Cove that includes a seven-day pass to SeaWorld.) 7007 SeaWorld Dr. Phone 407-351-3600. Toll-free 800-327-2420.

Discovery Cove: For SeaWorld fans who want to do more than just look at sea animals, this new park offers a chance to swim with dolphins, fish, manatees and even sharks. This experience is fairly expensive, however. The basic package runs US\$199 and allows visitors to spend the day at the park interacting with dolphins. You can also snorkel along a colorful reef nose-to-nose with thousands of tropical fish and explore shipwrecks and grottos. There's also a "Trainer for a Day" package that allows visitors to step behind the scenes by working side-by-side with the animal experts (US\$369). Less expensive packages (US\$69)—minus the dolphin encounter—are available. All packages include snorkeling equipment. Only 1,000 guests per day are allowed into the park, and reservations are required. Daily 9 am-5:30 pm. All ticket prices include a seven-day pass to SeaWorld Orlando. Central Florida Parkway (adjacent to SeaWorld). Phone 877-434-7268.

Universal Orlando—A theme-park complex centered on Hollywood and the film industry. Universal Orlando has two theme parks, Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure. CityWalk is the park's entertainment complex. Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure are open daily 9 am-6 pm, with extended summer hours. CityWalk is open daily 4 pm-2 am. A one-day pass (good for one park) costs US\$48 adults. A two-day pass is US\$95.35 adults, and a three-day pass costs US\$111.25 adults. CityWalk charges a nightly cover at its individual venues, and visitors can purchase a CityWalk Party Pass (all-club access) for US\$7.95. Parking costs US\$6. 1000 Universal Studios Plaza. Phone 407-363-8000.

Universal Studios: The attractions at the original park, Universal Studios, are largely based on movies. (For big-ticket rides and more to do, visit Universal; for movie-making lore or better shows, visit Disney-MGM Studios.) Don't miss the Back to the Future ride, a thrill-a-second flight simulation of a trip through time. Young children might find it scary (a dinosaur swallows you and spits you out). On the movie-based Men in Black ride, passengers shoot at aliens that shoot back, with cars competing against each other. There's also an attraction based on the films of Alfred Hitchcock with a surprise worthy of the master of suspense. The Jaws, King Kong and Earthquake rides are essentially variations on the same theme: Take your seat and watch as chaos envelops an otherwise normal situation. Tamer attractions for small children include the live sing-along, clap-along show featuring Barney and Baby Bop, as well as the TV and film production taking place at the children's cable-TV channel, Nickelodeon.

Islands of Adventure: This park offers high-action thrill rides that go far beyond anything found on Disney properties. An interactive 3-D roller-coaster ride, The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man, is the park's most popular attraction. Islands of Adventure's themed lands—not recommended for the faint of heart—include Seuss Landing (ride on a couch through The Cat in the Hat), The Lost Continent (Dueling Dragons is a roller coaster with two tracks that nearly collide), Jurassic Park (a river ride; guests escape dinosaurs by taking a steep dive into the water) and Toon Lagoon (another drencher). Marvel Super Hero Island, where you'll find the Spider-Man ride, also has Dr. Doom's FearFall, which drops riders 200 ft/60 m.

Universal CityWalk: A 30-acre/12-hectare entertainment complex with restaurants, nightclubs, shops, outdoor stages and a 20-screen cineplex. Emeril's and the NASCAR Cafe are popular restaurants. The Irish pub Pat O'Brien's and techno dance club The Groove attract trendy late-night partiers.

Wet 'n' Wild—Among the largest water parks in the world, Wet 'n' Wild offers flumes, high-speed water slides and a low-speed lazy river. Because it's so crowded during the summer, this park may be better to visit during cooler months—pools are heated—or after 4 pm. Daily 10 am-6 pm. US\$28.95 adults. Parking costs US\$5. 6200 International Dr. Phone 407-351-3200.

ZOOS AND WILDLIFE

Central Florida Zoological Park—Habitat for hundreds of animals and many beautiful local birds in a natural Florida setting. Plan on spending two pleasant hours there. Daily 9 am-5 pm except Thanksgiving and Christmas. US\$7 adults. 3755 Highway 17-92 (about 20 minutes north of downtown Orlando), Sanford. Phone 407-323-4450.

Gatorland—Popular with visitors and locals, Gatorland bills itself as the Alligator Capital of the World, and alligators are certainly in abundance. So are crocodiles, birds, reptiles and such shows as Gator Wrestlin', Gator Jumparoo and Snakes of Florida. Eat gator ribs and nuggets at Pearl's Smokehouse. Daily 9 am-dusk. US\$16.93 adults. 14501 S. Orange Blossom Trail (about 25 minutes south of the city). Phone 407-855-5496.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES

Ripley's Believe It Or Not—This "odditorium" is an excellent way to get out of the heat or rain. The building itself slants wildly, providing a clue to the campy and bizarre exhibits inside, such as a matchstick replica of a Rolls Royce. Daily 9 am-1 am. US\$12.95 adults. 8201 International Dr. (close to SeaWorld and Universal Orlando). Phone 407-345-0501.

Wonder Works—Feel the force of a hurricane and the trembling of an earthquake. Children participate in a number of hands-on activities that entertain and teach lessons in physics, meteorology and other sciences. You can't miss it from International Drive—the whole building, a 1930s warehouse, is upside down. Daily 9 am-midnight. US\$14.95 adults. Laser tag costs extra. 9067 International Dr. Phone 407-352-0411.

Shopping

Though Orlando's shops have lots of specialties, the buys of summer prevail: You'll have no problem finding swimwear, beach bags, sandals, umbrellas, beach games and equipment, such as Rakima, balls, bodyboards and surfboards. Shops in Winter Park provide classier options. Belz Outlet, at the north end of International Drive, is the area's largest collection of outlets and discount stores.

And if that's not enough, theme parks make sure that no one goes home empty-handed. There's a gift shop every few feet (or so it seems), and they sell everything from Mickey Mouse key chains to Alfred Hitchcock movies. But there's also a surprising array of fine (and expensive) art. Downtown Disney has boutiques filled with high-quality international merchandise, and the Animation Gallery at Disney-MGM Studios offers original and limited-edition reproductions of animation cells and pen-and-ink drawings from classic features.

SHOPPING HOURS

Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Some stores, especially those in malls, keep longer hours.

ANTIQUÉ STORES

Ivanhoe Plaza Antique District—A concentration of antique vendors is found along the 1800 block of N. Orange Avenue, near the intersection of Princeton Street. Prime, pricey antique shops stand next to funky boutiques selling 1960s collectibles and vintage records. (Rock and Roll Heaven has become a must-visit site for vinyl collectors, and it often attracts celebrity musicians.)

Renninger's Antique Center—This antiques mecca is 25 mi/40 km northwest of Orlando on Highway 441, near the picturesque town of Mount Dora. It spreads across a portion of 115 acres/47 hectares, with the flea market at the top of the hill and the antique market at its base. Most weekends the market hosts 200 dealers, but if you go the third weekend of November, January or February you'll see about 1,400 dealers. (On these Antique Extravaganza weekends you pay a US\$10 admission fee on Friday, US\$5 Saturday

and US\$3 Sunday; at other times admission is free.) The flea market is open Friday-Sunday from approximately 9 am-5 pm. (Downtown Mount Dora has a few antique shops that remain open during the week.) Phone 352-383-8393.

BOOKSTORES

Barnes & Noble—Orlando's largest and trendiest bookseller. This superstore has more than 150,000 titles and a CD and audiotape department heavily weighted toward classical music. Plentiful reading couches and an espresso bar make this a favorite hangout. Daily 9 am-11 pm. 8358 S. Orange Blossom Trail. Phone 407-856-7200.

Chapters Bookstore & Cafe—This store has lots of old books available at great discounts. The cafe serves tasty food, ranging from hamburgers to more sophisticated items. Monday-Thursday 11 am-9 pm, Friday and Saturday 11 am-11 pm. 717 W. Smith St., College Park (a suburb of Orlando). Phone 407-246-1546.

FACTORY OUTLETS

Belz Outlet—Two malls and four annexes in southwest Orlando at the end of International Drive are your best bets for power buying. Not all the stores are true outlets, most notably the two Disney-owned stores—Character Warehouse and Premier Warehouse. In addition to Disney merchandise (typically overstocks, discontinued items and seconds), you'll find reduced prices on such brands as Ann Taylor, Mikasa, Timberland, Birkenstock and Reebok. Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 5401 W. Oak Ridge Rd. Phone 407-354-0126.

GALLERIES

Granada Gallery—Limited-edition wildlife prints and other subjects. Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. 2562 E. Colonial Dr. (a five-minute drive from downtown). Phone 407-894-2771.

Park Avenue Gallery—Paintings, fine prints and watercolors, plus a collectibles and gifts store. Monday-Thursday 9 am-6 pm, Friday 9 am-8 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. 136 Park Ave. S., Winter Park. Phone 407-644-1545.

Village Gallery—Original art as well as decorative and limited-edition prints. Monday-Friday 9 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 9 am-1 pm. 1745 S. Orange Ave. Phone 407-843-0180.

MALLS AND SHOPPING AREAS

Church Street Station—One of Orlando's most diverse shopping complexes, with 55 specialty shops, restaurants and a game arcade in a stylish Victorian atmosphere. Unusual gems and stones, leather goods, electronic gadgets, a candle-making store and Florida-style clothing in light fabrics and bright colors. Daily 11 am-11:30 pm. 124 W. Pine St. (downtown). Phone 407-422-2434.

Park Avenue area—In fashionable Winter Park, a few miles east of downtown, is the area's best boutique shopping and dining (although chain stores are gradually replacing the distinctive, independent shops that once flourished there). Terrific window shopping and wonderful choices in pottery, antiques, clothing and books. Beautiful, well-kept parks and homes border the shopping district of this older suburb.

MARKETS

Downtown Farmers Market—One of the last remnants of the days when Orlando was just another agricultural town and markets were the city's source for fresh produce and flowers. Alongside the garden offerings are vendors selling pies, cakes, pestos, fresh breads and pates. (The mango chutney is extraordinary.) You can get hot coffee to go with breakfast goodies, and eat them at outdoor tables. Saturday 7 am-1 pm. At Church Street (under I-4 near Church Street Exchange).

SPECIALTY STORES

Fee Fi Faux—Well-known shop selling unusual furniture and gifts made with wrought iron and cast iron, as well as hand-painted designs on furniture. Parking is available across the street at the park. Wednesday-Saturday 10:30 am-4 pm. 1425 N. Orange Ave. (north of downtown). Phone 407-894-9855.

Florida Cactus—An immense nursery displaying 400-500 species of cactus at any given time. Monday-Friday 7 am-5 pm, Saturday 7 am-noon. Take highway 441 north to Plymouth, turn left at the first light (Boy Scout Boulevard), proceed a quarter mile to a stop sign marking Highway 437, turn right and then quickly turn left onto King. 2542 Peterson Rd. (about 15 mi/24 km north of Orlando). Phone 407-886-1833.

Dining

Any kind of food your heart desires can be found in Orlando, from Continental classics to funnel cakes. Good seafood is Florida's specialty, but some restaurants serve more intriguing dishes—gator tail, gator nuggets and swamp cabbage, for instance. But as Orlando becomes more sophisticated, more of its restaurants are venturing into Italian and French cuisine. Intense competition between Disney and Universal also has led both companies to add themed restaurants operated by world-famous chefs. (Emeril's, in Universal's CityWalk, is a prime example.)

You will, of course, find all the usual concession stands at the theme parks—hot dogs, pizza, ice cream, pretzels and more. Keep in mind that entertainment, not food, is the theme parks' forte. Fast-food meals tend to be bland and expensive. But the parks also offer a number of sit-down restaurants that make for a refreshing break from lines and rides. Several international restaurants at Epcot serve excellent, authentically prepared food, particularly the French and Mexican pavilions. You will pay a premium to eat meals with pizzazz, however.

Dress at most restaurants is casual, although some fine-dining establishments expect more formal attire—call for specific requirements.

Meal times are similar to those in the rest of the U.S.: Breakfast is generally 7-10 am, lunch 11 am-2:30 pm, dinner 6-10 pm.

Below is a sampling of restaurants in town. Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10; \$\$ = US\$10-\$20; \$\$\$ = US\$21-\$50; \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Resort and Spa, this restaurant serves four- to six-course international cuisine and offers a phenomenal view of Disney's nightly fireworks. Though formal, it's comfortable and romantic. Open nightly for dinner. Reservations suggested up to 30 days in advance. Jackets suggested. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1900 Buena Vista Dr., Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-827-3450.

Emeril's—The re-creation of Chef Emeril Lagasse's famed New Orleans restaurant in Universal Orlando's CityWalk quickly became a contender for best restaurant in town. Repeat customers tout such triumphs as Louisiana oyster stew, Grand Marnier soufflé and the superb treatment given to farm-raised quail. Lagasse himself spends about one week per month on the premises. (Moving sidewalks take you from Universal's giant parking lot to CityWalk. Be prepared for a walk to get to the restaurant.) Open daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations strongly suggested several days in advance. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 6000 Universal Blvd., No. 702, Orlando. Phone 407-224-2400.

Manuel's on the 28th—A popular place for romantic dinners and special occasions, it's on the 28th floor of a downtown bank building, affording an outstanding nighttime view. The menu includes slightly exotic items such as ostrich, bison, duck confit and a very popular Chilean sea bass entree with tomato salsa and lime aioli. Nightly specials are creative. Tuesday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations recommended on weekends. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 390 N. Orange Ave., Suite 2800, Orlando. Phone 407-246-6580.

Park Plaza Gardens—Award-winning cuisine in a New Orleans-style courtyard just a few minutes from downtown, in chic Winter Park. Many residents consider it the area's best. Fresh seafood, lamb, venison, poultry and an excellent wine list. Soft piano music Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday morning. After dinner, take a romantic stroll on fashionable Park Avenue. Daily for lunch and dinner, Sunday brunch. Reservations suggested, especially for dinner. Jackets suggested, but not required. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 319 Park Ave. S., Winter Park. Phone 407-645-2475.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SPECIALTIES

Charley's Steakhouse—This Florida chain is family owned and renowned for its oversized steaks. All meat is aged in-house, then grilled over oak and orange wood. All the steaks are good, but the rib eye is excellent. Side portions are big enough for at least two people, so skip the appetizers and save room for the main course. Open nightly for dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 6107 S. Orange Blossom Trail (20 minutes south of downtown), Orlando. Phone 407-851-7130.

Pebbles—The decor is minimalist and tropical, but the menu at this casual Florida bistro is innovative—try the duck with strawberries and pistachios. The wine list is pricey but select wines are available by the glass. Request a window box overlooking the private pond—an intimate setting. (There's a second location downtown, at 17 Church St. Phone 407-839-0892.) Monday-Friday lunch, dinner nightly. Reservations not accepted. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 12551 Highway 535 (in the Crossroads Shopping Center adjacent to Disney's Hotel Plaza Boulevard), Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-827-1111.

AMERICAN

Dexter's of Thornton Park—This downtown restaurant offers lovely al fresco dining. The posh neighborhood of Thornton Park is a historic tree-lined area with brick streets and friendly neighbors. The stylish American cuisine is available in full- or half-size portions. It's also a popular spot during happy hour. Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$. Reservations not accepted. 808 E. Washington St., Orlando. Phone 407-648-2777.

Harvey's Bistro—Spacious and inviting in the heart of downtown. New England pot roast is popular, and the angel-hair pasta with wild mushrooms is simple but delicious. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations accepted on weekends. \$-\$\$. Most major credit cards. 390 N. Orange Ave., Orlando. Phone 407-246-6560.

ASIAN

Ming Court—Intriguing combination of Asian favorites, Florida seafood and grilled items. We like the homemade dim sum and the sushi. Open daily for lunch and dinner, take-out available. Reservations required. \$\$\$. 9188 International Dr., Orlando. Phone 407-351-9988

P. F. Chang's—The design at this popular chain restaurant involves an open kitchen with a circular mural. Most dishes are served family-style. The salt and pepper shrimp (you eat them whole) are a delight. Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$ 436 N. Orange Ave, Winter Park. Phone 407-622-0188.

CONTINENTAL

Maison et Jardin—A romantic favorite, thanks to its garden setting, superior service and fine cuisine. Its wine cellar was rated by *Wine Spectator* as one of the best in the world. Showcase offerings include a grilled polenta cake with buffalo mozzarella, beef Wellington, filet mignon and stuffed Carolina quail. Open daily for dinner, plus Sunday brunch. Reservations accepted. \$\$-\$\$\$ Most major credit cards. 430 Wymore Rd., Altamonte Springs. Phone 407-862-4410.

DINNER THEATER

Pirate's Dinner Adventure—A live adventure dinner show featuring pirate stunts, music, comedy and dancing. Daily for dinner. Reservations required. US\$38.95. 6400 Carrier Dr. (off the International Drive strip). Toll-free 800-866-2469.

FRENCH

Le Coq au Vin—Generously portioned, fine French cuisine is served up in a comfortable, refurbished house. The menu changes every two months. (A local food critic describes it as "the place chefs go on their night off.") Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations suggested, particularly on weekends. \$\$-\$\$\$ Major credit cards except Discover. 4800 S. Orange Ave. (just five minutes from downtown). Phone 407-851-6980.

ITALIAN (INCLUDING PIZZERIAS)

Bergamo's—Singing waiters bring extraordinary Italian dinners to your table. Piano music starts at 7 pm nightly, and the waiters belt out songs from operas and operettas. Try the escargot or the unusual house salad. Daily for dinner. Reservations suggested. \$\$-\$\$\$ Most major credit cards. 8445 International Dr. (in Mercado Mediterranean Village). Phone 407-352-3805.

Mama Della's—This Italian restaurant located in Portofino Bay, Universal Orlando's first hotel, looks and feels like Mama converted her home into a cozy restaurant. Good choices include the chicken cacciatore and mixed grilled seafood. Tuesday-Sunday for dinner. Reservations suggested. \$\$-\$\$\$ Most major credit cards. Portofino Bay, 5601 Universal Blvd. Phone 407-503-1000.

Mona Lisa—Possibly the area's best classic Italian restaurant. Food is made from scratch and has everything you'd expect in a top-shelf Italian restaurant, including eggplant or shrimp appetizers, veal and grouper. Tuesday-Friday for lunch, Tuesday-Sunday for dinner. \$\$ Most major credit cards. 3500 N. Highway 1792 (15 minutes north of downtown Orlando), Lake Mary. Phone 407-330-1299.

LATIN AMERICAN

Latin Quarter—Contemporary Latin cuisine provides the flavor and spice for this Universal CityWalk dining venue. The restaurant sprawls across two floors. On the main level there is a large dance floor and stage where a live salsa band entertains patrons later in the evening. Professional dancers get the restaurant/club hopping around 10:30 pm. Cover charge is steep after 11 pm, so make reservations around 9 pm for a table near the dance floor and stay late for the festivities. Daily for lunch and dinner. 6000 Universal Boulevard, Suite 709. Phone 407-363-5922. Toll-free 888-745-2846.

MEXICAN

Amigos—Filling and tasty Tex-Mex lunches and dinners for around US\$10 an entree. Good food, cold beers and low prices make this eatery especially popular with locals on Friday and Saturday evenings. Daily for lunch and dinner. Most major credit cards. \$-\$\$ Several locations, including 6036 S. Orange Blossom Trail. Phone 407-857-3144.

Margarita's Grill—Central Mexican cuisine that does not disappoint. The style is simple and plain yet authentic. Try a burrito or beef tenderloin tips with tomatillo sauce. Be sure to order dessert—everything is good. Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$ Most major credit cards. 587 Chickasaw Trail. Phone 407-380-2600.

PR's—As close as Mickeyland comes to authentic "south-of-the-border" cuisine. The prices are competitive and the margaritas are humongous. Try the tamales. A very casual atmosphere with a buy-one-get-one-free happy hour 4-7 pm daily. Monday-Saturday for lunch, nightly for dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 4750 Kirkman Rd. (near Universal Orlando). Phone 407-293-8226.

SPANISH

Cafe Tu Tu Tango—For something slightly different—but reasonably priced—try Cafe Tu Tu Tango, which doubles as an art gallery. Diners order several small dishes, split them and sample a bit of everything. When in doubt, try the Barcelona stir fry, orzo paella or duck and mixed green salad. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 8625 International Dr. Phone 407-248-2222.

DISNEY RESTAURANTS

Gone are the days when the most exciting dining an amusement park had to offer was a hot dog for dinner and cotton candy for dessert. Most Disney World restaurants—with exceptions at Downtown Disney and at Victoria and Albert's—now have *priority seating*, meaning you don't get a confirmed reservation but, once you arrive, your name gets bumped to the front of the waiting line. Expect a 5-15 minute delay. Your best bet is to make priority seating reservations as soon as you enter the park—or up to 60 days before arrival. You should also ask about opening hours, which change seasonally: Call 407-939-3463 for information and reservations.

Reserve at least a couple of evenings to dine at the authentically appointed restaurants located in the World Showcase section of Disney's Epcot Center, which remains Disney's theme-park bastion of good food. The countries of World Showcase each have their own top-notch restaurant with traditional foods, detailed decor and servers who are native to the country represented.

California Grill—A long-time favorite atop the Contemporary Resort in Walt Disney World, California Grill offers a panoramic view of the Magic Kingdom (including the nightly fireworks display). And the food stands up to the view. Menus are updated seasonally, but always feature an array of steaks, chicken and seafood (there's a full sushi bar). Vegetarians won't go hungry, either. Wine selections are available by the glass. Open nightly for dinner. Reservations required—try to book at least two weeks in advance for a good table. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Contemporary Hotel, Disney World. Phone 407-939-3463.

Cinderella's Royal Table—Enjoy breakfast with Disney characters at this Magic Kingdom restaurant. It's open for lunch and dinner, too. Better known for its fairy-tale setting than its somewhat mundane food—American fare with a focus on beef and poultry. Admission and priority seating are required. \$\$\$. Phone 407-939-3463.

L'Originale Alfredo di Roma Ristorante—Otherwise known as Alfredo's, this Italian restaurant in Epcot's World Showcase is worth a visit. Homemade pastas and homegrown Italian comedy make it a favorite. Portions are generous: Try the antipasto salad as an appetizer (it's enough for four people). The pastas are delicious, and so is the special salmon prix-fixe dinner. Order the tiramisu for dessert. Daily for lunch and dinner (dine around 7 pm for a magnificent view of the fireworks show at 9 pm). Priority seating is recommended. \$\$\$. Italian Pavillion, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-3463.

Rainforest Cafe—Accessible from inside or outside Animal Kingdom, this restaurant recreates the Amazon experience. A tropical rain forest surrounds your table, and a timed rain shower and waterfall add even more ambience. The cuisine is fairly mainstream, but dishes have a little island flair. Sandwiches and burgers are a sure bet. Daily for lunch and dinner (avoid peak dining times for best service). \$\$ 505 N. Rainforest Dr., Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-3463.

Rose & Crown Pub and Dining Room—Located in Epcot's World Showcase with a picturesque lakeside view of the nightly fireworks display. Although English-in-theme, this restaurant serves more than fish-and-chips. Dishes include cottage pie and prime rib with authentic Yorkshire pudding. Daily for lunch and dinner. Priority seating is accepted for the dining room only. United Kingdom Pavillion, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-3463.

San Angel Inn—This Epcot dining experience is all about the setting: There's candlelight and soft tropical sounds in the background, and a wall mural depicts a sunset with pyramid ruins in the distance. Tortillas are made from scratch. Try the combination platters as an entree, and finish with the Kahlua mousse pie. Daily for lunch and dinner. Priority seating is recommended. \$\$\$. Mexican Pavilion, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-3463.

Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater Restaurant—Modeled after a 1950s drive-in theater, this Disney-MGM Studios restaurant has car-like booths and what may be the best burger and milkshake in all of Disney World. Watch movie trailers for classics such as *The Mummy*

and *Swamp Thing* as you place your order with a roller-skating carhop. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Priority seating is recommended. \$\$\$. Disney-MGM Studios. Phone 407-939-3463.

Victoria & Albert's—One of Zagat's top 10 restaurants in the nation, this is the place to go for special occasions. Meticulous service from personal butlers who serve a seven-course gourmet meal. The menu is customized daily to accommodate the freshest market items. The intimate dining room seats only 60 guests and does not encourage children. Seatings 5:45-6:30 pm and 9-9:45 pm daily. Reservations required. Jackets required for men. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 4401 Floridian Way, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-2383.

Walt Disney World Polynesian Luau—The most authentic luau this side of the Pacific. Hula maidens and fire dancers delight the audience, who devours tropical cuisine made by Disney's culinary experts. The menu includes island pork and lanai roasted chicken. Seats book fast in peak season; reservations are required. US\$44. Disney's Polynesian Resort, 1600 Seven Seas Dr. (accessible by boat or monorail), Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-3463.

Wolfgang Puck Cafe—Three distinct venues: A quick-service express restaurant serves "guests on the go;" a cafe with an upbeat, interactive atmosphere offers pasta, pizza, sandwiches, salads, a sushi bar and delicious chicken *pad thai*; the dining room on the second floor requires reservations and is modeled after the celebrity chef's Spago restaurant in Beverly Hills, California. The menu in the dining room is more elaborate, with California cuisine including Puck's famous version of wienerschnitzel. A special chef's table is available (well worth the extra expense). Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1482 Lake Buena Vista Dr., Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-938-9653.

Nightlife

Orlando's choices for evening entertainment are plentiful, but neither the nightclubs nor the comedy clubs are confined to any particular neighborhood. The areas with the highest concentration of nighttime diversions are Disney's Pleasure Island at Lake Buena Vista, the Church Street Station complex in downtown Orlando and Universal's CityWalk. Don't miss Pointe Orlando, a fun collection of shops, movie theaters and bars in the southeast part of the city, across from the convention center.

Generally, nightclubs open around 7 pm, but comedy clubs and other places that serve food often open earlier (around 11 am). Closing time is 2 am.

BARS, TAVERNS AND PUBS

Cricketer's Arms—A southwest Orlando favorite, this English pub serves 17 draft beers. Try the fish-and-chips or cottage pie. Live music (reggae, jazz, Top 40 or rock) nightly. Full bar. Open daily at noon. No cover. In the Mercado Mediterranean Village, 8445 International Dr. Phone 407-354-0686.

Scruffy Murphy's Irish Pub—Cozy pub, nestled in the center of downtown, serving traditional Irish food. (Beer and wine only.) Live band Wednesday-Saturday nights. Open daily at 11 am. No cover. 9 W. Washington St. Phone 407-648-5460.

COMEDY CLUBS

Sak Comedy Lab—Lively, fast-paced slapstick and improvisational theater. TheatreSports—the best of their three shows—has amateur comedians, and the performers seem deserving of their first-place finish in a national improv competition. Thursday 8 pm, Friday and Saturday 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 pm. US\$12 admission (Florida residents and students pay less). 380 W. Amelia St. Phone 407-648-0001.

DANCE CLUBS/NIGHTCLUBS

Church Street Station—Several entertainment clubs are inside Church Street Station. Rosie O'Grady's showcases Dixieland jazz, Cheyenne Saloon offers live country-and-western music and dancing, Orchid Garden plays rock 'n' roll. Phineas Phogg's concentrates on Top 40 music and is the only club with free admission. All of the clubs open at 7 pm. (Restaurants in the complex are open for lunch. Look for the cozy, 30-seat, romantic wine cellar just outside Orchid Garden.) All clubs charge US\$17.95 cover. 129 W. Church St. Phone 407-422-2434.

Universal's CityWalk—CityWalk offers a new concept in nightlife: For US\$7.95 you can purchase a CityWalk Party Pass giving you access to all of the nightclubs in the complex, which vary drastically in design and theme. Pat O'Brien's is a popular Irish tavern that

doubles as a late-night hangout. The Groove is a multi-level techno dance club for hardcore partiers. Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville is awash with the musician's famous island tunes. Bob Marley's features reggae. Latin Quarter spices it up with a full band belting out the hottest new salsa music. Dancing is popular at all places, and as a general rule they all have live entertainment every evening. Parking is free after 6 pm (otherwise it's US\$6). CityWalk doesn't really get hopping until about 10 pm, but doors open at 11 am. Phone 407-363-8000.

LIVE MUSIC

8 Seconds—Trendiest country music spot in Orlando. It's a frequent stopping point for big-name, touring acts. Ladies drink free on Friday and there's bull riding on Saturday. Open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday beginning at 7 pm. No cover. 100 W. Livingston (off I-4, near the TD Waterhouse Centre). Phone 407-839-4800.

Backstage at the Clarion—This club appeals to the over-25 crowd and features upbeat live music and happy-hour specials. Doors open nightly at 5 pm. No cover. 9700 International Dr. (near the Orange County Convention Center). Phone 407-996-1719.

Recreation

Orlando's climate enables year-round pursuits of practically every outdoor activity, especially those involving water or green grass. There are a myriad of lakeside beaches throughout the city as well as the surrounding countryside—in addition to the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico beaches that are within about an hour's drive. More than 125 golf courses, some created by world-renowned designers, are within a 4-mi/6-km radius of downtown. The temperate climate attracts players such as legend Arnold Palmer and local resident Tiger Woods, as well as their admirers and wannabes. (If you can stand the heat, summer is the best time to hit the links because courses are not as crowded then as they are the rest of the year.)

Besides the golf courses, which seem to be everywhere, there are numerous places to indulge your passion for tennis, hiking, canoeing or fishing. Blue Springs State Park (in Orange City, about an hour's drive from Orlando) is full of wildlife and places to hike, snorkel and canoe. The water there is unbelievably clear. If you go between November and March, you may spot a manatee (you'd have to see it from the observation area—you're not permitted to canoe when manatees are passing through the area). Wekiva Springs State Park in Apopka has about 13 mi/21 km of hilly, woodsy hiking trails, both short and long distance. You can also go swimming in one of Florida's natural springs there.

GOLF

Cypress Creek Country Club—This 18-hole championship course is just a few blocks from Universal Studios. Greens fees vary by season, averaging around US\$50; after 2:30 pm, fees drop to around US\$30. 5350 S. Vineland Rd. Phone 407-351-2187.

MetroWest Country Club—The course was designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. During high season (January-May), greens fees are US\$90. Twilight play (starting after 2:30 pm) is US\$50. Low-season rates are US\$46-\$70. Carts included. 2100 S. Hiawassee Rd. Phone 407-299-1099.

Performing Arts

While Orlando does not have the artistic profile of larger metro areas such as Miami or Atlanta, the growing population continues to support the performing arts. Plans are underway for a theater district that will highlight new and cutting-edge shows. If you look hard enough, you'll find performances taking place year-round. Consider the Southern Ballet Theatre, which is known for fresh choreography (phone 407-426-1733). Another good option is the Orlando Opera Company (phone 407-426-1700). Top productions from these organizations and traveling art troupes are staged at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center on W. Livingston Street.

Spectator Sports

For those more inclined to watch than participate, Central Florida offers many choices in professional sports action. The Orlando Rays, a minor-league team, play baseball at Tinker Field (for tickets, call 407-849-2020). In the spring, four major-league teams train within 50 mi/80 km of Orlando: the Atlanta Braves, the Houston Astros, the Kansas City Royals and the Florida Marlins. Two basketball teams, the NBA's Orlando Magic and the WNBA's Orlando Miracle, play at the TD Waterhouse Centre (for tickets to either team, call 407-839-3900).

A number of world-class golf tournaments are held in the Orlando area every year, including the Bay Hill Invitational (held in mid March) and the National Car Rental Classic (held in October).

Day Trips

To **Busch Gardens**. Thousands of exotic animals roam the park behind the walls and fences that protect guests. In addition to such wildlife adventures as the Serengeti Plain and Myombe Reserve, there are roller coasters and water rides. In Tampa, about 75 mi/120 km southwest of Orlando. If you'd like to hear a marathon phone recording of park information, call 813-987-5082. If you'd like to talk to a live person, call 813-987-5212.

To **Eatonville**. About 20 minutes north of downtown Orlando, it was the first incorporated African-American town in the U.S. Zora Neale Hurston—writer, anthropologist and folklorist—wrote books and stories about growing up in Eatonville. The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts offers insight into her accomplishments and information on Eatonville (closed weekends). 227 E. Kennedy Blvd. Phone 407-647-3397.

To **Kennedy Space Center**. Head east to the Cape Canaveral area. It can be a full day's outing—maybe more if you have an unquenchable thirst for Tang and space technology. Covering 70 acres/28 hectares, the center includes an exhibit-filled visitors complex as well as assembly facilities and launch sites. The area beyond the visitor's complex is restricted, so bus tours are the only way to see the launch areas. You can sign up for the bus tours at the visitor's complex. Make sure you catch an IMAX movie—we highly recommend at least one. Phone 407-452-2121.

Local Tours

Old-fashioned Airboat Rides—You want to see 'gators? This 90-minute tour guarantees it. Participants will also see water birds and Indian mounds as they ride through the St. John's River marshlands. Tours daily. US\$35. 24004 Sisler Ave., Christmas (about 25 mi/40 km from downtown Orlando). Phone 407-568-4307.

Winter Park Scenic Boat Tours—A sedate, 45-minute narrated cruise through the lakes and canals of historic Winter Park. Participants pass by Rollins College, Kraft Azalea Gardens and several mansions of the city's rich and famous residents. Tours run daily 10 am-4 pm. US\$4 adults. 312 East Morse Blvd., Winter Park. Phone 407-644-4056.

Transportation

Cars play a big role in most Florida vacations: Those who don't drive to the state usually rent a vehicle on arrival. If you confine your stay to Walt Disney World, you can get by without a car, but if you plan to hop between parks or to see other area attractions, you'll want wheels.

Study up on the area highways to figure out the best way to get where you're going. Because of its closely placed hotels and attractions, International Drive in Orlando continues to be difficult and time-consuming to navigate, and many hotel guests choose to walk short distances along it. The I-Ride buses make stops up and down the street and cost US\$1 per trip.

AIR

Orlando International Airport (ORL) is about 12 mi/19 km southeast of the city, a 15-minute drive to downtown under normal traffic conditions. There are three terminals (A, B and Delta), with a fourth under construction. Anyone meeting you should ascertain the arrival gate (whose number will indicate which terminal) or should arrange to meet you at either Baggage Area A or B (remembering that B serves the new Delta terminal as well). For airport information, call 407-825-2352.

Connecting Transportation

Best way: The best way to get into town or to Disney is to rent a car (you'll want one once you get settled, anyway.) Major car-rental agencies maintain branches at the airport. Their offices are one level below baggage claim. Follow the signs.

Other options: Taxi stands are next to baggage claim on the second level. A taxi will cost about US\$45 to downtown, US\$40 to Disney. Some hotels provide courtesy vans from the airport. Hotels near the airport request a telephone call for pickup at baggage

claim. Commercial shuttles (Transtar Airport Shuttle and Mears Transportation) operate from the airport to area hotels and downtown. LYNX operates a no-transfer airport bus that costs the same as other routes: US\$1, exact change required.

BUS

The Greyhound bus terminal is at 555 John Young Parkway. Phone 407-292-3424.

CAR

It's best to orient yourself by learning the major highways crossing Orlando diagonally, north-south and east-west.

Diagonally: The most traveled highway, I-4, runs southwest to Tampa and northeast to Daytona Beach. (Official signs will say "West" or "East.") I-4 provides access to almost any part of the city and its suburbs.

North-south: The tedious Florida Turnpike toll road leads to Orlando from I-75 in the north and from the Atlantic coast and Miami in the south.

East-west: The Beeline Expressway, which skirts past the airport, and the East-West Expressway (now renamed Highway 408), which edges past downtown, accommodate east-west traffic and levy tolls ranging from US\$0.25-\$1.

Between the airport and attractions, use I-4 and its connection with the Beeline Expressway to save time and money. The Greenway (417) also connects the airport with Disney World, but while it may be less congested during busy times, it's a bit longer and far more expensive.

The Beeline is the best bet for traveling to Port Canaveral, Spaceport USA or Cocoa Beach. The East-West Expressway (Highway 408) will deposit you on Highway 50, which also leads to Cocoa Beach, but you'll have to travel through city traffic first.

In the past year, the city of Orlando has changed many signs to reflect road numbers in addition to street names, making it easier to navigate. Still, a map is mandatory and—without all roads clearly marked—you may still have to ask for directions.

A number of parking garages—look for aqua-and-blue signs above the sidewalk—provide parking throughout the city and the Church Street Station complex. A parking lot also exists beneath I-4.

Remember to turn on your car's headlights during rain and to wear seat belts—it's state law.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

When you see a sign with a purplish-pink paw print, you know you've found yet another station in the bus system that carries passengers throughout Central Florida. It's operated by the LYNX Transportation Authority. LYNX (a play on the word *links* and winner of a contest to name the transit system) provides Lymmos, complimentary buses running through downtown Monday-Friday 6:40 am-7 pm. LYNX also runs daily I-Ride buses along touristy International Drive 7 am-midnight. US\$1, exact change required.

The regular LYNX buses run Monday-Friday. There's no evening service on holidays, and weekend schedules vary according to the popularity of the route. Pick up schedules at the hot-pink Downtown Bus Station, 78 W. Central Blvd., or at the Transit office, 1200 W. South St. Phone 407-841-2279.

SHIP

So many cruise ships offer visits to Orlando's amusement parks that some people have been fooled into thinking this Central Florida city is on the ocean. But not even Disney could accomplish that feat. It's not far, however: Only 50 mi/80 km separate the parks and Port Canaveral on the Atlantic, making cruise-Orlando combinations increasingly popular. Most cruise lines offer charter bus transportation from the airports to the port and to hotels near Orlando's amusement parks. The Bee Line Expressway (Highway 528) connects Orlando directly with the coast (less than an hour's drive), within sight of Port Canaveral.

TAXI

Order taxis by phone—cabdrivers may or may not respond to being hailed on the street.

TRAIN

Amtrak offers service from sunny California to sunny Orlando three times a week, and other trains pull into the station from northern cities seven days a week. The station is about a mile from downtown. 1400 Sligh Blvd. Phone 407-425-9411. There also are Amtrak stations in Winter Park (150 W. Morse Blvd., phone 407-645-5055) and Kissimmee (111 Dakin St., phone 407-933-1170).

Where to Stay

Hotel rates in Orlando are often favorable because the competition for tourists is stiff. Most of the hotels are clustered in three main areas: southwest, near Disney properties and attractions; downtown Orlando; and southeast Orlando, near the Orange County Convention Center and the Orlando International Airport. Make reservations well in advance, particularly at hotels near the attractions, and especially over the Christmas holiday, the two weeks around Easter and mid June through August.

Those who want to focus on Orlando's many other non-theme park attractions can stay in the city center or in the Kissimmee-St. Cloud area, which is farther from downtown Orlando than Downtown Disney but offers a wide choice of accommodations, from chain hotels to mom-and-pop establishments.

Below is a sampling of hotels; it is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Expect costs to fall within these general guidelines, based on the standard rate for a single room: \$ = US\$65-\$125; \$\$ = US\$126-\$185; and \$\$\$ = more than US\$185. Check for varying rates, including those offered to business travelers during weekends and conventions.

AIRPORT AREA

Hyatt Regency Orlando Intl Airport—Most rooms face the skylighted atrium (some look out on the tarmac). Oversized rooms, fitness center, pool, two restaurants, meeting facilities (small conference rooms). Fax machines and data ports. The hotel is inside Orlando International Airport. \$-\$\$\$. 9300 Airport Blvd, Orlando. Phone 407-825-1234. Toll-free 800-233-1234. Fax 407-856-1672.

Radisson Hotel—Just north of the airport with health club, pool, spa and meeting facilities. Complimentary round-the-clock airport shuttle. Modern decor. \$-\$\$\$. 5555 Hazeltine Natl Dr, Orlando. Phone 407-856-0100. Toll-free 800-333-3333. Fax 407-855-7991.

CITY

Courtyard at Lake Lucerne—A collection of three bed-and-breakfast inns highlighted by Orlando's oldest house—the 1883 Norment-Parry Inn. It's stuck between highway overpasses but it's beautifully furnished and there are hidden gardens, too. Within walking distance of Church Street Station. \$-\$\$\$. 211 N Lucerne Circle E, Orlando. Phone 407-648-5188. Toll-free 800-444-5289. Fax 407-246-1368.

Four Points Sheraton Orlando Downtown—An older hotel within walking distance of Church Street Station and well away from the glitz of International Drive. Rooms with terrific views of tranquil Eola Park just across the street. Request a lake view or a pool-and-lake view. Heated pool, exercise room, restaurant and the Monkey Bar, a lounge that seems suspended in the early 1960s. \$-\$\$\$. 151 E Washington St, Orlando. Phone 407-841-3220. Toll-free 800-325-3535. Fax 407-422-7074.

Holiday Inn Orlando Downtown—Located beside I-4, this hotel overlooks Lake Ivanhoe. Just two blocks from the TD Waterhouse Centre and Orlando Expo Center. Pool, restaurant. \$. 304 W Colonial Dr, Orlando. Phone 407-996-0100. Toll-free 800-523-3405. Fax 407-996-0103.

Marriott Downtown—This downtown hotel is adjacent to the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, across from the Orlando Arena and just three blocks from the clubs and nightlife of Church Street Station. Pool, health club, restaurant. \$-\$\$\$. 400 W Livingston St, Orlando. Phone 407-843-6664. Toll-free 800-574-3160. Fax 407-839-4982.

The Westin Grand Bohemian—This 250-room property, which opened in April 2001, is in the heart of downtown (it's literally across the street from City Hall). The hotel caters to business executives, with such features as Internet access in every room. There's an elegant dining room with an extensive wine cellar. \$\$\$\$. 325 S Orange Ave, Orlando. Phone 407-313-9000. Toll-free 866-663-0024. Fax 407-313-9001.

NEAR THE PARKS

Hard Rock Hotel—This property, which opened in January 2001, resembles a Spanish mission. The hotel is inundated with rock 'n' roll memorabilia (the pool plays music underwater). In addition, the hotel offers "no line, no wait" express passes for all guests to Universal theme parks and a complimentary shuttle to the parks. \$\$\$\$. 5800 Universal Blvd, Orlando. Phone 407-503-7625. Toll-free 800-235-6397. Fax 407-503-2020.

Marriott Orlando World Center—One of Marriott's spectacular hotels. Set on beautiful grounds, the 28-story hotel provides a championship 18-hole golf course, miniature golf, seven restaurants, indoor and outdoor pools with waterfalls, a health club, tennis courts and an on-property masseuse. Large meeting rooms are on the premises. A local company provides shuttles (US\$5 round trip). About 2 mi/3 km from Disney and attractions. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. 8701 World Center Dr, Orlando. Phone 407-239-4200. Toll-free 800-621-0638. Fax 407-238-8777.

The Peabody Orlando—This hotel is best known for the parade of its resident ducks, which waddle down the red carpet each day at 11 am and 5 pm. It has a beautiful entryway, as well as conversation rooms throughout the hotel, large meeting rooms, four lighted tennis courts, a pool, workout room, piano bar, and casual and gourmet restaurants. In the heart of the convention district, across from the Convention Center, near SeaWorld. \$\$\$\$. 9801 International Dr, Orlando. Phone 407-352-4000. Toll-free 800-732-2639. Fax 407-351-0073.

Portofino Bay Hotel—This resort is about as upscale as it gets in Orlando. The Mediterranean-style lakeside village is adjacent to Universal Orlando. Amenities include eight restaurants and bars, two swimming pools with water slides, a bocce court, gondolas that take you to the theme parks and state-of-the-art creature comforts in all guest rooms. The more luxurious villas provide butler service. \$\$\$\$. 5601 Universal Blvd, Orlando. Phone 407-503-1000. Toll-free 888-322-5541. Fax 407-503-1010.

Renaissance Orlando Resort at Seaworld—Breathtaking atrium and impeccable upkeep. Outdoor pool and hot tub, tennis courts, health club, spacious guest rooms, large meeting spaces. Across the street from SeaWorld and about 10 minutes from Disney attractions. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. 6677 Sea Harbor Dr, Orlando. Phone 407-351-5555. Toll-free 800-327-6677. Fax 407-351-9994.

Residence Inn by Marriott—Suites have kitchens and accommodations for four. Three pools, whirlpools, tennis and volleyball; some small meeting rooms accommodating no more than 30. The hotel is 2 mi/3 km from Disney and has a shuttle to Disney World (US\$6 round trip per person). \$\$-\$\$\$\$. 8800 Meadow Creek Dr, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-239-7700. Toll-free 800-244-4070. Fax 407-239-7605.

Disney's Boardwalk Inn—Separate boardwalk area and traditional ocean decor—Atlantic City atmosphere, including the hyper-cool Atlantic Dance Hall, featuring bands playing swing music. The Boardwalk area fronted by the hotel has two upscale restaurants, an ESPN Sports Bar and other traditional seashore activities and shops. \$\$\$\$. 2101 N Epcot Resorts Blvd, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-5100. Fax 407-939-5150.

Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort—Separate villages reflect the variety of styles of the Caribbean Islands, all centered on a huge swimming pool that could have been built by pirates. Near MGM Studios. \$-\$\$\$. 900 Cayman Way, PO Box 10000, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-934-3400. Fax 407-934-3288.

Disney's Contemporary Resort—Largest A-frame in the world and famous for its monorail shuttle. Furniture and decor please ultramodern tastes. \$\$\$\$. 4600 N World Drive, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-1000. Fax 407-824-3539.

Disney's Coronado Springs Resort—Near Animal Kingdom, the resort re-creates a Mexican town and is the only moderately priced resort with full convention facilities. The style is a blend of southwestern U.S. with traditional Mexican architecture—adobe, colorful tiles and whitewashed walls. A giant Mayan pyramid rises beside the pool. \$-\$\$\$. 1000 West Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-939-1000. Fax 407-566-4913.

Disney's Dixie Landings Resort—Antebellum setting with water landscape of bayous, a river and an old-fashioned swimming hole. Provides stylized mansion and clapboard accommodations. All rooms are identical. \$-\$\$\$. 1251 Dixie Dr, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-934-6000. Fax 407-934-5777.

Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort—Campsites and cabins with a nature theme, ideal for families. While farther from Disney parks than other resorts, it has more local activities, including boating, horseback riding, an evening campfire program and a petting zoo. \$\$\$\$. 4510 N Fort Wilderness Trail, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-2900. Fax 407-824-3058.

Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa—Grand indeed, this is Disney's top-of-the-line accommodation: a turn-of-the-century Victorian architectural beauty decorated in white, cream and pastels. The good things in life—clay tennis courts, an attentive concierge, massage, etc.—are there. \$\$\$ 4401 Floridian Way, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-3000. Fax 407-824-3186.

Disney's Old Key West Resort—Studios and apartments with Caribbean styling. The closest hotel to the Disney parks that offers fully-stocked apartments for those who plan to cook. Part of the Disney Vacation Club, with a purchase plan similar to a time-share program. \$\$\$ Walt Disney World, 1510 N Cove Rd, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-827-7700. Fax 407-827-7710.

Disney's Polynesian Resort—Bamboo and tiki lamps accent tropical foliage. Located across from the Magic Kingdom, this original Disney hotel serves South Pacific cuisine and adheres to a barefoot-elegance theme. Luaus held nightly. \$\$\$ 1600 Seven Seas Dr, PO Box 10000, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-2000. Fax 407-824-3174.

Disney's Port Orleans Resort—Re-creates the jazz and feel of New Orleans, featuring a French Quarter atmosphere with wrought iron, wood shutters and cobblestones. The smallest of Disney's moderately priced hotels, the restaurant and ambience are French Creole. \$-\$\$ 1251 Riverside Dr, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-934-5000. Fax 407-934-5353.

Disney's Wilderness Lodge—Wood, stone and Native American decor. Beyond the rooms, this hotel highlights U.S. history as the West was settled. Giant chandeliers re-create Native American tents, and the fireplace, burning year-round, is made of rocks found in the Rocky Mountain region. \$\$\$ 901 W Timberline Dr., PO Box 10000, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-824-3200. Fax 407-824-3232.

Disney's Yacht Club Resort—This hotel is connected with, but run separately from, another hotel called the Disney Beach Club. But it's tough to tell where one begins and the other ends. The Yacht Club resembles a New England seaside resort from the 1870s. \$\$\$ 1700 Epcot Resorts Blvd. Phone 407-934-7000. Fax 407-934-3450. The Beach Club, with hardwood floors and lots of wicker and pastels, has a casual, beachside ambience. \$\$\$ 1700 Epcot Resorts Blvd, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-934-7000. Fax 407-934-3450.

Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin—Decorated with oversized statues, both the Dolphin and the Swan use "entertainment architecture," which means bright and bold paint jobs. (The exterior is covered in huge painted leaves.) Boat service to MGM Studios and Epcot, with a shuttle to Animal Kingdom. Popular with conventions. \$\$\$ 1500 Epcot Resorts Blvd, Lake Buena Vista. Phone 407-934-4000. Toll-free 800-524-4939. Fax 407-934-4499.

Money

BANKING HOURS

Monday-Thursday 9 am-4 pm, Friday 9 am-6 pm. Larger branches offer Saturday drive-throughs 9 am-noon.

TAX INFORMATION

State sales tax on most purchases is 6% in Orange County, 7% in Seminole County. Resort tax is 4%.

MAIL AND PACKAGE SERVICE

U.S. Post Office—The downtown post office is open Monday-Friday 7 am-5 pm, Saturday 9 am-noon. 46 E. Robinson. Toll-free 800-275-8777.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

The Orlando Sentinel is the area's major daily newspaper. Its Friday "Calendar" lists such things as movie reviews, hours and prices of attractions, local concert listings and restaurant reviews (<http://www.orlandosentinel.com>). Now that Orange Avenue News & Cards is out of business, there's no single newsstand with a wide selection. Vending machines in tourist areas such as International Drive carry *The Miami Herald*, *The St. Petersburg Times*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *Tampa Tribune*. Some business-oriented hotels provide such publications as *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*.

Orlando Magazine is a slick publication with stories of local interest as well as a comprehensive listing of attractions, restaurants and concerts. At most newsstands, or you can purchase a copy in advance: phone 407-767-8338.

The Orlando Weekly (www.orlandoweekly.com) is a quirky entertainment and news tabloid with listings of concerts, movies and nightclubs. Look for its distinctive red or white boxes, mostly at shopping complexes and bus stops.

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDES

See Orlando spotlights events and attractions in the Orlando area and also includes restaurant and entertainment information. Free when you're in town, but you can get a copy in advance if you send US\$1.25 to 5422 Carrier Dr., Suite 104, Orlando, FL 32819. Phone 407-363-7977. *Orientation* publishes Orlando maps and lists restaurants and attractions; it's available at hotels. Phone 407-876-1577.

COMPUTER RENTAL

Keystone Computer Rentals—Mac, IBM and Compaq. Free delivery service Monday-Friday. Call during the week for Saturday and Sunday delivery rates. Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm. 7111 Grand National Dr., Suite 102 (near the convention district). Phone 407-352-7323.

Unacom Computer Rentals—Mac, IBM and Compaq. Will pick up and deliver anywhere in the Orlando area for a fee. Monday-Friday 8 am-5 pm. 555 Winderly Place, Suite 10. Phone 407-660-5700.

CONVENTION SERVICES AND MEETING PLANNING

Family Fun Time Conventions, Inc.—This company develops personalized activities and offers a variety of entertainment for the children of convention attendees. 11555 Lake Butler Blvd. (near Walt Disney World), Windermere. Phone 407-876-3862.

MESSENGER SERVICES

ACE Expeditors—Serves downtown and the entire state 24 hours a day. Phone 407-423-4223.

Air Traffic Services—Their services cover the state of Florida. Open 24 hours. In downtown Orlando. Phone 407-841-2586.

PHOTOCOPYING

American ReproGraphics—They'll fax, print, and provide digital color copies and standard photocopies. Free pickup and delivery Monday-Friday 7 am-7 pm, Saturday 9 am-1 pm. 1999 W. Fairbanks Ave. (about five minutes from downtown Orlando), Winter Park. Phone 407-644-5366.

Kinko's—Offers copying services, self-service copies, IBM and Mac computers and a host of office services. Pickup and delivery service Monday-Friday at all locations. The branch at the Convention Center is open Monday-Friday 8 am-5 pm. 9800 International Dr. Phone 407-363-2831. Other locations are open 24 hours, including the downtown office at 47 E. Robinson St. Phone 407-839-5000.

For More Information

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Kissimmee-St. Cloud Convention and Visitors Bureau—Offers visitor information similar to that of its neighbor in Orlando, but with a heavier emphasis on the southern area east of Walt Disney World. Most major attractions belong to both convention and visitors bureaus. For more information, phone toll-free 800-831-1844. Fax 407-847-0878. <http://www.floridakiss.com>.

Orlando Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau—The bureau provides maps and tourist information, and it also books meetings and lodging in the area. The bureau also sells an Orlando Magic Card with discounts at participating hotels and attractions. 6700 Forum Dr., Suite 100, Orlando 32821-8087. Phone 407-363-5871. Visitor information center is open daily 8 am-8 pm (except for Christmas) at the Gala Center, 8723 International Dr., Suite 101. Phone 407-363-5871. <http://www.go2orlando.com>.

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