

Guide to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at the Universal Orlando Resort

By Globetrotting Disney Blog ©2020



Introduction

The Universal Orlando Resort is the birthplace of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Phase 1, themed to the village of Hogsmeade, opened at Universal's Islands of Adventure in June 2010. Today, Hogsmeade includes its flagship attraction, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, along with Flight of the Hippogriff and its newest attraction, Hagrid's Magical Creatures Adventure. Shops and restaurants found at Hogsmeade from the novels and movies can also be found within the land.

With the massive success of The Wizarding World at Islands of Adventure, Phase 2 opened in 2014 at Universal Studios. Themed to Diagon Alley, the new area includes its flagship attraction, Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts. Along with the Gringotts, the land also includes numerous Diagon Alley shops and restaurants made famous from J.K. Rowling's novels.

Both lands are serviced by the Hogwarts Express. The train stops at two stations: Hogsmeade Station in Islands of Adventure and King's Cross Station in Universal Studios. Once aboard, guests are assigned a compartment and experience events similar to the movies.



Between the attractions, both lands host numerous restaurants, shops and shows. Overall, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is a beast and the best themed land in the Universal Parks empire. Every section is meticulously detailed and immediately pulls guests from the real world and into the amazing magical world J.K. Rowling created back in 1997.

Additionally, the actors and actresses from the movies reprised their roles for most of the attractions, adding even more to the magic. Ever wonder how Disney's Galaxy Edge was born? Look no further than The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

The below guide will breakdown The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. First, we will look at the attractions, restaurants, shops and shows available in Hogsmeade at Islands of Adventure. Next, we will explore the attractions, restaurants, shops and shows

available in Diagon Alley at Universal Studios. Finally, we will provide our own analysis and list of our favorites.

Universal's Islands of Adventure

Islands of Adventure includes the Hogsmeade section of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Below is a breakdown of Hogsmeade's attractions, restaurants, shops and shows with summaries for each experience. For attractions accepting Express Pass, it is noted before the summary.

Attractions:



1) Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey (Express Pass): Flagship attraction of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Taking place inside Hogwarts Castle, guests board "broomsticks" and fly around Hogwarts with Harry, Hermione and Ron (to name a few). The attraction shifts from 3D screens featuring the original actors to traditional dark ride elements (without screens). The attraction also includes the best queue with guests exploring most of Hogwarts Castle, hearing from the Sorting Hat and viewing a Defense Against the Dark Arts class.

2) Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure: Replaced the Dueling Dragons Coaster in 2019, the attraction is a story coaster taking guests on Hagrid's flying motorcycle through the Forbidden

Forest. Along the way, guests will "fly" as fast as 50mph, encounter magical creatures such as centaurs and become trapped within the Devil's Snare. Easily the best attraction at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter and the best attraction in the United States (sorry Disney). Be warned, it is also the most popular attraction at Universal Orlando with wait times longer than three hours. Arrive early.

- 3) Flight of the Hippogriff (Express Pass): Family coaster with the ride vehicle themed to a hippogriff. The attraction is a slow quick roller coaster that winds around Hagrid's pumpkin patch and Hagrid's Hut. Skip if you are above eight.
- 4) Hogwarts Express: Hogsmeade Station (Express Pass): Guests must have a park hopper tickets in order to board the train, which will take guests to Diagon Alley in Universal Studios. Guests will sit in a compartment recreated from the movies. During the quick ten-minute journey, scenes echoing the movies will play on the window as guests leave Hogsmeade and arrive in Diagon Alley.

Restaurants:

- 1) Three Broomsticks: Quick service tavern specializing in traditional British foods. Dishes include Traditional English Breakfast, Fish and Chips, Rotisserie Chicken and the

excellent Shepard's Pie. The restaurant does not accept reservations. Guests order at the register, pick up their food from a counter before finding a table in the large dining area. Great place for lunch or dinner.

- 2) Hog's Head: Pub located in the back of the Three Broomsticks. Specializing in drinks, the pub serves Butterbeer, Pumpkin Juice, draft beer, wine and cocktails. The Hog's Head Brew is an excellent beer after exploring Hogsmeade.

Shops:

- 1) Dervish and Banges: Souvenir shop selling various "magical" items made popular from the Harry Potter films. Items for purchase include Quidditch supplies, t-shirts, robes and stationery. Along with its large inventory of goods for purchase, the shop is notable for



displaying *The Monster Book of Monsters*. Just be careful not to lose your fingers!

- 2) Flich's Emporium of Confiscated Goods: Souvenir shop located inside Hogwarts Castle near Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. Many different items from the movies can be found such as robes, magical creature toys and Death Eater masks.

- 3) Ollivanders: Wand shop themed to the famed location in Diagon Alley (a second Ollivanders can be found in Diagon Alley at Universal Studios). Guests can purchase wands, character wand replicas and interactive wands to "cast" spells throughout Hogsmeade. Special guests can be chosen to participate in a show and see a wand "chose" them, just like Harry's wand did in the Sorcerer's Stone.

- 4) Owl Post: Stationary shop themed to a Harry Potter "post office", or owlery. Items for sale include stationary staples, such as quills, seals and ink. For those who still write letters, they can be mailed here with a special Hogsmeade postmark.

- 5) Honeydukes: Sweet shop selling favorites from the movies and books including Acid Pops, Exploding Bonbons and Fizzing Whizzbees.
- 6) Sumptuous Sweets and Beguiling Delights: Another sweet shop selling Harry Potter favorites such as Cauldron Cakes and Chocolate Frogs. The shop also sells the famous (or infamous) Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans. I highly recommend avoiding the vomit flavor.

Shows:

- 1) Frog Choir: Daytime show featuring a small choir of Hogwarts students accompanied by the smooth bass rumbles of giant throaty frogs. Four students, one from each house, perform familiar wizarding songs with their croaking frogs.
- 2) Dark Arts at Hogwarts Castle: Nighttime show on select nights showcasing the evil power of Lord Voldemort as he “transforms” Hogwarts Castle. Unspeakable creatures rise on the walls of the castle, along with cruel legions of Dementors and Inferi. And of course, the whole show is under the masterful score of John Williams.
- 3) The Nighttime Lights at Hogwarts Castle: Nighttime show hosted on select nights featuring a dazzling spectacle of music and lights around Hogwarts Castle. The four houses of Hogwarts are celebrated during the show.
- 4) Triwizard Spirit: Daytime show themed to the upcoming Triwizard Tournament. Watch the celebration as students from Hogwarts, Beauxbatons and Durmstrang cheer on their schools in this colorful procession.

Universal Studios



Universal Studios includes the Diagon Alley section of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Below is a breakdown of Diagon Alley's attractions, restaurants, shops and shows with summaries for each experience. For attractions accepting Express Pass, it is noted before the summary.

Attractions:

- 1) Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts (Express Pass): Travel far below Diagon Alley and view Goblins as you explore the wonders of the wizarding bank, Gringotts. Once below the surface, board a train as it races through the caverns as you attempt to escape from the evil Bellatrix and Lord Voldemort himself. Outstanding multi-dimensional thrill ride that is both a roller coaster and motion simulator. An absolute can't miss.
- 2) Hogwarts Express: King's Cross Station (Express Pass): Guests must have a park hopper tickets in order to board the train, which will take guests to Hogsmeade in Islands of Adventure. Once inside the station, guests can "walk through" a brick wall to enter Platform 9 ³/₄. After boarding the train, guests will sit in a compartment recreated from the movies. During the quick ten-minute journey, scenes echoing the movies will play on the window as guests depart Diagon Alley and arrive in Hogsmeade.

Restaurants:

- 1) The Fountain of Fair Fortune: Pub serving a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages include Dragon Scale, Wizard's Brew, Strongbow and Fire Whiskey. Non-alcoholic beverages include Butterbeer, Frozen Butterbeer and

Pumpkin Juice. Small snacks available for purchase include Butterbeer Soft Serve Ice Cream and chips.

- 2) Leaky Cauldron: Large quick service restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner with an English twist. Dishes include Toad in the Hole, Cottage Pie and Fish & Chips. Beverages for purchase include Pumpkin Juice, Butterbeer, Wizard's Brew and Fire Whiskey. Excellent spot for lunch or dinner. Reservations are not accepted.
- 3) Eternelle's Elixir of Refreshment: Kiosk serving different flavored elixirs that "transform" when mixed with water (to give the appearance of potions). Flavors include Fire Protection, Babbling Beverage or Draught of Peace.
- 4) The Hopping Pot: Quick service restaurant serving a variety of different drinks. Drinks for purchase include Butterbeer, Pumpkin Juice, Wizard's Brew and Dragon Scale. Light snacks, such as Butterbeer Ice Cream are also available for purchase.

Shops:

- 1) Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes: Colorful joke shop based off the emporium created by twins George and Fred Weasley in the Harry Potter novels and movies. Items for sale include Pygmy Puffs, U-No-Poo pills and Puking Pastilles. You'll also find classics like Bombtastic Bombs, Extendable Ears and love potions.
- 2) Sugarplum's Sweet Shop: Sweet shop selling different wizard sweets. Items for sale include Bertie Bott's Every-Flavor Beans, Acid Pops, Exploding Bonbons and Pink Coconut Ice. Pro tip: Be careful with the beans.
- 3) Scribbulus: Stationary shop selling a variety of writing supplies. Items for sale include ink, feather quills and parchment. Notebooks, journals and postcards are also all available for purchase.
- 4) Magical Menagerie: Plush toy shop selling stuff animals similar to the animals available for purchase to witches and wizards in the Harry Potter universe. Items for sale include



Crookshanks, Fang, Buckbeak and Scabbers. Guests can also practice their Parseltongue outside the store.

5) Borgin and Burkes: Fancy venturing down Knockturn Alley? At Borgin and Burkes, guests can purchase Death Eater masks, skulls, apparel and collectibles to live out your evil fantasies. Who knows, maybe they'll let you use the Vanishing Cabinet.

6) Ollivanders: Wand shop made famous in the movies. Guests can purchase wands, character wand replicas and interactive wands to "cast" spells throughout Diagon Alley. Special guests can be chosen to participate in a show and see a wand "chose: them, just like Harry's wand did in the Sorcerer's Stone. A second location can be found in Hogsmeade at Islands of Adventure.

- 7) Wisecre's Wizarding Equipment: Labeled "Your One-Stop Sorcery Shop", guests can purchase essential wizard supplies such as crystal balls, telescopes, moon charts and hourglasses. For any student on their way to Hogwarts, this shop has all your back to school shopping supplies.

- 8) Wands by Gregorovitch: Even Diagon Alley has competition. Like Ollivanders, Wands by Gregorovitch sells wands for new witches and wizards, character wand replicas and interactive wands.



- 9) Quality Quidditch Supplies: Once you make the house team, this is the shop for all your Quidditch supplies. Guests can purchase Quidditch team apparel, hats, sweaters, brooms, Golden Snitches and even Quaffles.

- 10) Gringotts Money Exchange: Guests can trade US currency for Gringotts bank notes in \$10 or \$20 denominations for purchases at Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade. Any unused Gringotts bank notes can be traded back for US currency at the end of your visit.

Shows:

- 1) The Tales of Beedle the Bard: Stage show performed by the Wizarding Academy of Dramatic Arts. Two famous tales are performed, *The Fountain* and *The Tale of Three Brothers*, using stylized scenic pieces, props and puppetry.

Globetrotting Disney Blog Analysis

Prior to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, we were not big fans of Universal's parks. But the addition of the Harry Potter universe changed everything. Disney blew it big time after rescinding its letter of intent to create a Harry Potter themed land at Magic Kingdom.

With Disney unwilling to work under J.K. Rowling's strict supervision, Universal quickly snatched the rights and saw its attendance explode due to the land's popularity. Afterwards, Disney began its crusade of purchasing every media franchise available, from Marvel to Star Wars.

It's easy to see why. The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is THAT good. Galaxy Edge is a direct reflection of the success of The Wizarding World. We first visited The Wizarding World in Florida in 2019 and immediately fell in love.



The theming is on point, the attractions are spectacular and different and how could anyone not want to sample a Butterbeer (sorry Blue Milk).

Below is our pick of the best of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter:

Best Attractions:

- 1) [Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure](https://globetrottingdisneyblog.com/summary-review-hagrids-magical-creatures-motorbike-adventure/): When this attraction opened, the wait times exceeded ten hours. Although COVID-19 probably will prevent that from ever happening again, it is easy to see why this attraction is so popular. Simply, it's amazing and beats anything found at Walt Disney World or Disneyland. With a track at over a mile, the attraction is long, features numerous launches to over 50mph, state of the art audio-animatronics and the best roller coaster surprise you'll never expect (I won't spoil it here). You can find our full review of the attraction here: <https://globetrottingdisneyblog.com/summary-review-hagrids-magical-creatures-motorbike-adventure/>

This is a not to be missed attraction. We recommend riding it first thing in the morning. As you fly through the Forbidden Forest, marvel at the engineering and the awesome story before you. Trust me folks, nothing is better than this.

- 2) Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts: The second-best attraction at The Wizarding World, Escape from Gringotts takes you on a grand journey through the greatest wizard bank of all, Gringotts. Marvel at the queue as you enter the grand lobby of Gringotts before descending deep below the surface to the heavily guarded vaults.

Board the mine train and experience an out of this world attraction as it shifts from a traditional roller coaster to a motion simulator with actors from the movies reprising their roles. And try your best to escape from Lord Voldemort and Bellatrix Lestrange.

Best Dining:

- 1) Three Broomsticks: I always wondered how it would feel visiting the Three Broomsticks after reading J.K. Rowling's novels. After visiting Hogsmeade, I was not disappointed. The food was excellent for theme park food with an all English menu. Thankfully, the menu does not feature any hamburgers or chicken nuggets, but traditional English food found throughout Britain's pubs. The service was friendly, fast and efficient. The dining room is huge and offers plenty of indoor seating. For those who enjoy an alcoholic beverage, the Hogs Head is attached and guests can drink plenty of Wizard's Brew or Fire Whiskey. It's amazing.

Best Shops:

We did not have a favorite shop during our visit. We aren't huge into merchandise and did not purchase any Harry Potter related items. However, we did walk into most of the shops and looked at all of the cool trinkets. Without a doubt everything available for purchase looks like it came straight from the movies. Plus, the shops themselves are themed down to the tiniest details. Guests can easily spend half a day exploring all of the shops and discovering the smallest details. If you desire an item from the Harry Potter universe, you can easily find it in one of the shops. With over 15 different places to shop, there is plenty to buy.



Best Show:

During our visit, we did not watch any shows. We didn't have time in our busy day. But the shows look awesome (from YouTube) and we personally can't wait to watch the Dark Arts from Hogwarts Castle (which had yet to premiere during our visit). Personally, we are bigger on attractions than shows, but the shows around Hogwarts Castle do look fun. Once we watch the shows, we will update this guide.

Conclusion

Once again, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is absolutely amazing. During your visit, we recommend visiting Hogsmeade at Islands of Adventure first to knock out the big-name attractions, like Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure.

Once you finish exploring Hogsmeade, hop on the Hogwarts Express and visit Diagon Alley. Both lands are awesome and Universal killed it, really bringing the world of Harry Potter to us Muggles.

Check out the next page for an easier to read breakdown of all attractions, restaurants, shops and shows to check off during your visit to the Universal Orlando Resort.

Thanks for reading!



Islands of Adventure

Attractions:

- Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey (Express Pass)
- Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure
- Flight of the Hippogriff (Express Pass)
- Hogwarts Express: Hogsmeade Station (Express Pass)

Restaurants:

- Three Broomsticks
- Hog's Head

Shops:

- Dervish and Banges
- Flich's Emporium of Confiscated Goods
- Ollivanders
- Owl Post
- Honeydukes
- Sumptuous Sweets and Beguiling Delights

Shows:

- Frog Choir
- Dark Arts at Hogwarts Castle
- The Nighttime Lights at Hogwarts Castle
- Triwizard Spirit

Universal Studios

Attractions:

- Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts (Express Pass)
- Hogwarts Express: King's Cross Station (Express Pass)

Restaurants:

- The Fountain of Fair Fortune
- Leaky Cauldron
- Eternelle's Elixir of Refreshment
- The Hopping Pot

Shops:

- Weasley's Wizard Wheezes
- Sugarplum's Sweet Shop
- Scribbulus
- Magical Menagerie
- Borgin and Burkes
- Ollivanders
- Wiseacre's Wizarding Equipment
- Wands by Gregorovitch
- Quality Quidditch Supplies
- Gringotts Money Exchange

Shows:

- The Tales of Beedle the Bard