

Guide to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Hollywood

By Globetrotting Disney Blog ©2020



Introduction

Following the massive success of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at the Universal Orlando Resort, it was only a matter of time before Harry Potter would make its way to Hollywood. In 2016, six years after Universal brought the world of Harry Potter to muggles, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter officially opened at Universal Studios Hollywood.

Like its predecessor at Islands of Adventure, the Universal Studios Hollywood version of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is set in the village of Hogsmeade, with Hogwarts Castle in the background. Although not as large as the Florida Hogsmeade, the Hollywood version includes the flagship attraction, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey, Flight of the Hippogriff and Ollivanders Wand Shop. Guests can also visit the Three Broomsticks, Honeydukes and Dervish and Banges.

Overall, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is a beast and the best themed land in the Universal Parks empire. Every part of Hogsmeade is meticulously detailed and immediately pulls guests from the real world and into the magical world J.K. Rowling created back in 1997. The actors and actresses from the movies reprised their roles for Harry Potter and the Forbidden

Journey, 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 at Universal Studios Hollywood. We will look at the attractions, dining, shops and shows available in Hogsmeade. And at the end, we will provide our own analysis and list of our favorites.



The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Hollywood

Universal Studios Hollywood includes the Hogsmeade section of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter first created at the Universal Orlando Resort. Unlike Orlando, Universal Studios Hollywood does not include a Diagon Alley area and does not include a functioning Hogwarts Express (a Hogwarts Express train engine is available for photos). Below is a breakdown of Hogsmeade's attractions, dining, 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) 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. Don't wait for the attraction if the line is long.

Dining:

- 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.
- 3) Magic Neep Cart: Small cart serving fruit, beverages and snacks.



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 found in Diagon Alley from the books and novels. 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 "choose" 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) Wiseacre'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.
- 7) Zonko's Joke Shop: Before there was Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, there was Zonko's Joke Shop. The shop is your go-to place for novelty items, Extendable Ears, Screaming Yo-yos and Nosebleed Nougat.
- 8) Gladrags Wizardwear: Once the Sorting Hat sorts you into one of Hogwarts' four houses, it's time to dress appropriately. At Gladrags, you can find a variety of fashionable wizardwear. Items for sale include robes, accessories, jewelry and of course, anything Hufflepuff.
- 9) Hogsmeade Station: On your way back to London, Hogsmeade Station is your last stop for souvenirs. Harry Potter inspired products for purchase include train tickets, wallets, passport cases and backpacks. Just try not to lose your luggage (or owl).

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) 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.

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 Hollywood in 2017 and immediately fell in love.

The theming is on point, the attractions are spectacular 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) Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey: With only two attractions, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey is a no-brainer for the best attraction. When this attraction first opened in 2010 in Orlando, it was a game changer. Transitioning between screens and traditional dark ride elements, the attraction takes guests on an epic journey around Hogwarts.



Lead by Harry Potter, guests “fly” on broomsticks, flying around Hogwarts, the Whomping Willow and a Quidditch match. The ride vehicle simulates flying on broomstick and despite each vehicle carrying four guests, is able to create an individual experience. The ride vehicle will drop, spin and twist in synch with the projections on screen and the live elements outside the screens.

The queue to board the attraction is outstanding. Guests will enter Hogwarts castle itself. Guests will see the dungeons, greenhouses and tons of talking portraits. Other parts of the queue include a Defense Against the Dark Arts class with Harry, Ron and Hermione, the Sorting Hat and a speech from Professor Dumbledore.

Overall, it’s an absolute amazing attraction. Universal nailed everything, from the theming, ride vehicles and queue. All actors from the movies reprise their roles, adding even more magic to the attraction. I wonder how Disney Imagineering feels about it?

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. We did see them perform as we walked by but the two shows didn't look all that interesting. Personally, we are bigger on attractions than shows. Once we watch the shows, we will update this guide.

Conclusion

Once again, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is a fantastic addition to Universal Studios. During your visit to Universal Studios Hollywood, we recommend visiting Hogsmeade first thing in the morning. Immediately walk to Hogwarts Castle to explore the queue and board Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. If the line is short after you depart the attraction, ride it again.

From there, we recommend riding The Flight of the Hippogriff and then explore the shops of Hogsmeade. At lunchtime, grab a bite to eat at the Three Broomsticks and a stiff drink at the Hog's Head. After eating and drinking, ride Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey one last time before you leave Hogsmeade.

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 Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Hollywood.

Thanks for reading!

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Attractions:

- Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey (Express Pass)
- Flight of the Hippogriff (Express Pass)

Dining:

- Three Broomsticks
- Hog's Head
- Magic Neep Cart

Shops:

- Dervish and Banges
- Flich's Emporium of Confiscated Goods
- Ollivanders
- Owl Post
- Honeydukes
- Wiseacre's Wizarding Equipment
- Zonko's Joke Shop
- Gladrags Wizardwear
- Hogsmeade Station

Shows:

- Frog Choir
- Triwizard Spirit