



2025 EDITION

ORLANDO

MUST DO ITINERARY



*From the creators of the EMMY
award winning travel series...*



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IT'S MY PARTY



EDITORIAL OPINION

Greetings, fellow travelers! I'm Erik the Travel Guy, and I'm excited to embark on another adventure with you. As a passionate globetrotter, I've had the privilege of exploring various corners of the world, and I've gathered a wealth of information to help you make the most out of your trips. However, before we dive into the wonders of travel, I want to make it crystal clear that the information contained in this itinerary isn't just a one-size-fits-all set of facts. Instead, it's a fusion of both information and my personal editorial opinions.



While this itinerary is designed to be a valuable resource for travelers, it's essential to recognize that my experiences and preferences may not align with everyone's tastes, interests, or travel styles. It's important to approach this itinerary with an open mind and use the information provided as a starting point for your own exploration. In the following pages, here is what you'll find:

1. Information: This category includes facts, figures, historical data, travel logistics, and objective details about destinations, accommodations, and attractions.
2. Editorial Opinions: These are my personal insights, recommendations, and subjective viewpoints. They reflect my experiences and preferences as a traveler.

Traveling is a highly personal endeavor, so use this guide as a tool to plan your trip, but don't be afraid to customize your adventure to suit your unique interests and desires.

Safety should always be a top priority when exploring new locations. Before embarking on your journey, conducting thorough online research can provide valuable insights into the local culture, neighborhoods to avoid, and any potential risks. However, it's equally important to exercise common sense and caution wherever you go.

Remember that the true essence of travel lies in the unexpected, the unscripted, and the joy of discovering the world on your terms. Safe travels, and may your adventures be as unique as you are!



WELCOME TO



ORLANDO



Is it possible to visit Orlando (and the surrounding areas) and NOT shell out thousands of dollars at a Walt Disney World Theme Park? The answer is a resounding YES! I have been to Orlando and the surrounding communities so many times over the years, I've simply lost count. You may be surprised to learn that Orlando is filled with plenty to do and see in just about every month of the year. Let this curated guide serve as your day-by-day playbook to Orlando, Florida.

Visitors to Orlando can expect an unforgettable vacation filled with enchantment and excitement. Known as the theme park capital of the world, Orlando offers a magical experience for families, couples, and friends alike. From the enchanting wonders of Walt Disney World, where fairy tales come to life, to the thrilling rides and attractions at Universal Orlando Resort, adventure knows no bounds. Visitors can explore the diverse marine life at SeaWorld Orlando and interact with dolphins, sharks, and colorful fish. For those seeking a break from the theme parks, Orlando boasts world-class shopping, dining, and entertainment options. The city's vibrant arts and culture scene, along with beautiful parks and gardens, provide a relaxing contrast to the adrenaline-pumping adventures. Whether it's enjoying the captivating performances at Cirque du Soleil, teeing off at championship golf courses, or simply basking in the Florida sun, visitors can expect a vacation filled with wonder, laughter, and cherished memories in Orlando.



LOOK BEFORE



YOU BOOK



> CLIMATE

Orlando, Florida, is renowned for its pleasant and tropical climate. The city experiences a humid subtropical climate, characterized by hot, humid summers and mild, dry winters. During the summer months, which span from June to September, temperatures often soar into the high 80s to mid-90s Fahrenheit (around 30-35°C), accompanied by afternoon thunderstorms that provide a refreshing break from the heat. Winters, from December to February, are mild and comfortable, with temperatures ranging from the 60s to 70s Fahrenheit (15-25°C). Rainfall is relatively evenly distributed throughout the year, making Orlando lush and green. Overall, visitors can expect warm and sunny weather for most of the year, making it an appealing destination regardless of the season.



> WHEN TO GO

Most places (Orlando included) experience a variety of visitor “seasons”. I characterize these seasons as “peak”, “value” and “shoulder”. Finding the best time of year to visit for you, depends on your circumstances. I personally love visiting Orlando in February.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
VALUE	VALUE	PEAK	SHOULDER	PEAK	PEAK	PEAK	PEAK	SHOULDER	SHOULDER	PEAK	PEAK

LET'S GO!



KNOW BEFORE



YOU GO

VIA AIR TO MCO

Arriving at Orlando International Airport (MCO) is the first step to embarking on a memorable journey in the heart of Florida. As one of the busiest airports in the United States, MCO welcomes travelers with a bustling yet efficient atmosphere. Upon landing, visitors are greeted with modern facilities, friendly staff, and convenient amenities. The airport's well-organized layout ensures a smooth transition, from baggage claim to ground transportation options. Travelers can easily find shuttles, taxis, and rental car services, allowing for seamless connectivity to various parts of the city and its renowned attractions. MCO's clean and spacious terminals feature a diverse range of restaurants, shops, and services, catering to the needs and tastes of travelers from around the world. Whether arriving for leisure or business, the welcoming ambiance of Orlando International Airport sets the tone for an exciting and enjoyable stay in the vibrant city of Orlando.

CAR RENTAL? YES!

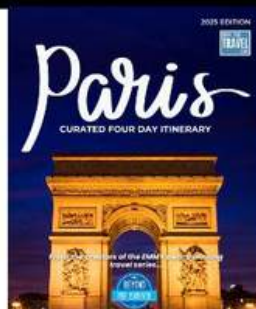
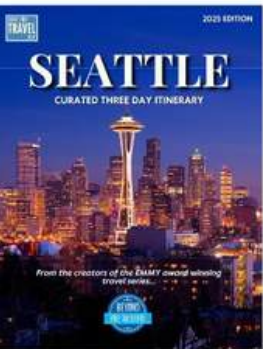
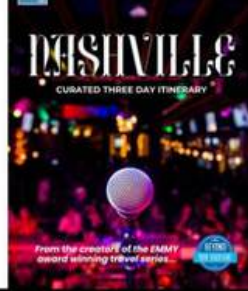
Renting a car for an Orlando vacation can significantly enhance the overall experience and convenience of the trip. While the city offers reliable public transportation and ride-sharing services, having a rental car provides the freedom to explore Orlando and its surrounding areas at your own pace. Orlando's attractions, theme parks, shopping centers, and restaurants are spread out, making a car invaluable for reaching various destinations efficiently.

VIA AIR TO SANFORD

Arriving at Sanford Orlando International Airport (SFB) offers travelers an alternative gateway to the enchanting attractions of Orlando. While SFB is located approximately 30 miles northeast of downtown Orlando, it's essential for visitors to plan their transportation accordingly, as the drive to the city center takes about 45 minutes to an hour, depending on traffic conditions. Despite the slightly longer distance, the airport provides a convenient option for budget-conscious travelers, with various ground transportation choices available, including shuttles, rental cars, and taxis.

450+ HOTELS & RESORTS!

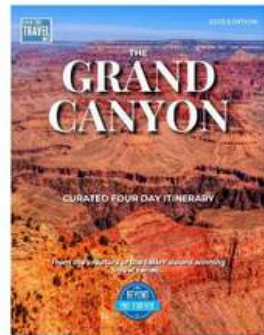
Orlando boasts an extensive array of accommodation options, catering to every traveler's needs and preferences. The city is home to an impressive number of hotel rooms and resorts, ranging from budget-friendly accommodations to luxurious, world-class resorts. With the presence of renowned theme parks like Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando Resort, and SeaWorld Orlando, the hospitality industry has flourished, resulting in a vast selection of over 450 hotels and resorts. Visitors can choose from themed resorts within the parks, elegant boutique hotels, family-friendly lodgings, and upscale, full-service hotels, ensuring that there's a perfect stay for every type of traveler.



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www.EriktheTravelGuy.Eisy.com





This curated itinerary features some of my favorite on the beaten path spots in Orlando. These are my choices presented for your consideration. In addition, I've been quite generous with the timing of each entry, so take this trip at your pace. You'll find in the coming pages two travel days (inbound and out) and three full days in Orlando. Remember, I am not a huge fan of scheduling ANYTHING on a travel day because air travel can be unpredictable. Enjoy your trip!



The Travel Day

One of my most favorite "travel tips/rules" is: respect the travel day. Book a direct flight if at all possible and preferably the first flight of the day from your home airport. If driving or taking the train, then try to arrive at noon. Pack a carry on only if possible. At the time of your booking or a few days before your travel day, call your hotel and request an early check in. The travel day is not agenda-driven. I believe it should be used to acclimate to your temporary environment. Just relax...you're on vacation and remember, sightseeing starts tomorrow.

Mid Day - Hotel Check In

Orlando World Center Marriott

8701 World Center Dr, Orlando, FL, 32821
(407) 239-4200



It is critical you book a room you love. In other words, do not "cheap out" on the accommodations! This is the room you are going to go to sleep in (and wake up in) on every day of your getaway. Select a property for your reasons. I like properties within walking distance of a few attractions or restaurants I know I want to try. I look for well-lit side streets in popular neighborhoods. I rarely stay on HIGH RISE top floors and I avoid the ground floor if possible. If I have an option, then I prefer to not book accommodations at a property with room doors facing the outdoors.

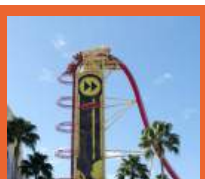


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DAY 1

Your Orlando getaway starts with a world class theme park. I have written a separate article listing some of my suggestions. But understand, the day will be long, hot and (depending on the time of year) crowded.

8:00am – 9:00am

Breakfast at the Hotel

In my estimation, a good breakfast on a busy and active day sets the tone. Get some fried eggs and bacon! Enjoy a coffee and don't forget the water.

9:00am – 6:00pm

Order Tickets Online and In Advance

Theme Park Day

Pick the theme park that best suits your needs. My first visit to Orlando came with a full day visit to The Magic Kingdom. Over the years, I've done Universal trips and Disney trips...it's really up to you.

Get your tickets in advance and arrive as early as possible. Prioritize what you wish to see and do and go for it!

Lunch should be kept light and in whatever theme part you are visiting.

Unless you are specifically staying in the park for a show, then try to depart the park around 5:00pm ET.

7:00pm – 9:00pm

Disney Springs

Dinner at The BOATHOUSE – Disney Springs

Dining at The BOATHOUSE® in Disney Springs offers an upscale waterfront experience that combines fresh seafood, premium steaks, and nautical charm. Situated along Lake Buena Vista, this restaurant features vintage dream boats from the 1930s to 1950s and offers options for both indoor and dockside seating. The menu boasts a variety of dishes, including raw bar selections like oysters on the half shell, wild-caught shrimp, and yellowfin tuna poke. Whether you're seeking a romantic dinner, a family celebration, or a leisurely meal with scenic views, The BOATHOUSE® delivers a memorable dining experience in the heart of Disney Springs.



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DAY 2

Day two and you are up and at 'em for a day of sightseeing, walking in the footprints of history, delicious food and a healthy dose of exploration. The second day is a little lighter than the first as you continue to assimilate to the environment. Stay hydrated!

7:00am – 10:00am

Hot Air Ballooon Expedition & Brunch

Soaring above the picturesque landscapes of Orlando with Bob's Balloons, a hot air balloon ride promises a breathtaking and serene adventure, providing panoramic views of the city's beauty from the sky.

10:00am – 1:00pm

Wild Florida – Animal Park

At Wild Florida, visitors can embark on thrilling airboat rides through the pristine Everglades, encountering native wildlife like alligators and exotic birds in their natural habitat. Additionally, the park offers animal encounters, showcasing a diverse array of creatures, from sloths to lemurs, providing an interactive and educational experience for nature enthusiasts of all ages. And don't forget the drive through safari park!

1:00pm – 1:30pm

Light Lunch at the Hotel

Be sure to fuel up for the afternoon with a light lunch wherever the day takes you. Dinner won't be until 8:00, so plan accordingly.

1:30pm – 5:30pm

Pool Time or Outlet Mall Shopping

At this point I'd most-likely want an afternoon to lounge by the pool. So do that, or walk along Duvall Street, pop into the shops and just take it all in.

6:30pm – 9:00pm

Dinner and a Show – The Speakeasy Murder

Step into the roaring 1920s at The Speakeasy Murder, Orlando's immersive murder mystery dinner show that blends suspense, humor, and vintage flair. Hosted at Teatro Martini, this interactive experience invites guests to don their detective hats and unravel a thrilling whodunit set in a lively Prohibition-era speakeasy. As the plot unfolds, you'll enjoy a prix fixe dinner and have the opportunity to engage with colorful characters, gather clues, and even influence the outcome of the story through audience voting. Whether you're a seasoned sleuth or a first-time participant, The Speakeasy Murder offers an unforgettable evening of entertainment, complete with live music, period costumes, and a touch of jazz-age glamour. For tickets and more information, visit speakeasymurder.com.



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DAY 3

Day three and it is a full dance card. Keep an eye on your airline app and remember to check in for your flight (if applicable).

8:00am – 9:00am

Breakfast In Bed

Let the hotel staff cater to your every breakfast whim. Enjoy lounging in your robe as a delicious selection of pastries, fresh fruit and delicious coffee are served to you in your room.

9:00am – 3:00pm

Kennedy Space Center

Visiting the Kennedy Space Center offers an awe-inspiring journey into the history and future of space exploration, with captivating exhibits on NASA's iconic missions, including the Apollo moon landings. Expect to witness actual space shuttles, experience interactive astronaut encounters, and marvel at the vastness of the cosmos in this immersive and educational space center.

This includes lunch at the Orbit Cafe or Space Bowl Bistro. You may want to attend a meet & greet with a real astronaut!

3:00pm – 7:00pm

Afternoon at Your Leisure

Getting back to the hotel in the middle of the afternoon allows for a little downtime before the evening. This could be spent shopping, window shopping, napping or lounging by the pool.

7:00pm – 9:00pm

Dinner and a Show – The Pirate's Dinner Adventure

Embark on a thrilling voyage at Pirates Dinner Adventure in Orlando, where a fully rigged 18th-century pirate ship serves as the stage for an action-packed evening of entertainment and dining. Set within an indoor lagoon, this interactive show features daring sword fights, aerial acrobatics, and a captivating storyline that invites audience participation, making it an engaging experience for guests of all ages. As you immerse yourself in the swashbuckling spectacle, enjoy a three-course meal that includes options like roasted chicken, pork loin, or vegetarian pasta, accompanied by sides such as Yukon Gold potato purée and seasonal vegetables. Children's meals and dessert upgrades, like fried cheesecake, are also available.



WHAT'S FREE IN

ORLANDO

Orlando, famous for its theme parks and attractions, also offers a plethora of free activities and sights, making it an ideal destination for budget-conscious travelers. One of the city's highlights is Lake Eola Park, a picturesque oasis in downtown Orlando. Visitors can enjoy leisurely strolls around the lake, feed swans and other birds, or rent swan-shaped paddle boats. For art enthusiasts, the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College offers free admission and showcases a diverse collection of art spanning centuries. Additionally, the Orlando Farmers Market, held every Sunday at Lake Eola Park, provides a delightful experience where visitors can sample local produce, gourmet foods, and handmade crafts.



Nature lovers can explore the Tibet-Butler Nature Preserve, a pristine natural area with hiking trails and boardwalks, allowing glimpses of Florida's native wildlife and lush vegetation. The Harry P. Leu Gardens, a beautiful 50-acre botanical garden, offers free entry on the first Monday of every month and provides a serene escape amidst blooming flowers and exotic plants.

Moreover, the city hosts numerous free events and festivals throughout the year, including outdoor concerts, art festivals, and cultural celebrations. Disney Springs, an entertainment complex by Disney, offers free entry and a vibrant atmosphere with live performances, street entertainment, and beautiful waterfront views.

Lastly, don't miss the chance to witness the nightly fireworks show at the Magic Kingdom from outside the park's gates. Finding a comfortable spot around Seven Seas Lagoon provides a magical view of the fireworks, illuminating the night sky and creating unforgettable memories without spending a dime. These free attractions and activities showcase Orlando's diverse offerings, ensuring that visitors can enjoy the city's charm and excitement without breaking the bank.



ADDITIONAL



RESOURCES

In my opinion, one of the best resources for credible information about any given place is the official tourism bureau. Here, it is Visit Orlando. Their website is filled with helpful information and the layout of the site is easy to navigate on any device. Check with the official tourism bureau as you research your trip to Orlando.

<https://www.visitorlando.com/>



THANK YOU