

# FLORIDA

YOURS TO DISCOVER

## **Unexpected FLORIDA**

A shop, see, sip and savour  
guide to the Sunshine State's  
most unexpected highlights

*PLUS!*

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with manatees**

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secrets, revealed**

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The latest & greatest in Florida travel

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In partnership with Visit Florida, a most unexpected gift is arriving on the doorsteps of *Canadian Traveller's* Experience The World subscribers. Claim yours today.

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Hogwarts Express

 **UNEXPECTED**

# Universal Orlando Resort

BY JOHANNA READ

Whether it's your first visit or you've lost count, Universal Orlando aims to surprise and delight at its two Orlando theme parks, water park, and at its CityWalk entertainment area. Expect even more once the newly announced Epic Universe opens.

## THE WIZARDING WORLD

Universal's entire **Wizarding World of Harry Potter** is a wonder. From the new Dark Arts projection show at Hogwarts Castle on the **Hogsmeade** side of **Universal's Islands of Adventure**, to **Diagon Alley** and the (air-conditioned and shaded) **Knockturn Alley** on the **Universal Studios Florida** side, to the **Hogwarts Express** which connects the two. (Watch for the chocolate frogs that hop by your compartment.) The extreme level of detail will make it difficult for Potterheads to want to explore the rest of the parks.

## PEER BEHIND THE SCENES

Several of Universal's top attractions offer free "backstage" tours. If your timing is right and you ask nicely, you might get to visit **Men in Black: Alien Attack's** Immigration Room to get your photo taken with multi-armed aliens, walk beneath the dark tracks at **Revenge of the Mummy**, or go behind-the-scenes at **Race Through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon**.

## FIND HIDDEN "EASTER EGGS"

As the parks constantly evolve, Universal creates subtle odes to attractions past. For example, the **Fast & Furious – Supercharged** motion simulator was built on the spot that formerly housed Beetlejuice Graveyard Revue. Hidden in the automotive displays that keep you entertained while you're queued are two Beetlejuice tributes: A toolbox belonging to the poltergeist and a green-haired bobblehead doll. Easter eggs are hidden throughout the parks; staff will help you spot them if you ask.

## MAKE YOUR OWN S'MORES

Universal CityWalk Orlando's new restaurant, **Bigfire**, is located right outside Universal's Islands of Adventure. It features comfort foods and meats grilled over a specialty wood blend. After dinner, toast gourmet marshmallows at your table, then melt peanut butter cups and dark chocolate to make your own s'mores. And check out the staff uniforms. Are they trying to be Canadian?

## A THRILLING SURPRISE

The newest *Harry Potter* ride is **Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure**, and it's a record-breaker. Your enchanted motorbike is Florida's longest coaster, the only U.S. free-fall coaster, and boasts seven launches (more than any other in the world). Taking riders both forward and backward on a 1,500-metre track through the Forbidden Forest, this three-minute ride is uproariously fun for kids and adults. Those who know the books well will kick themselves for not anticipating the surprise. Find the coaster in Hogsmeade at Universal's Islands of Adventures, next to **Flight of the Hippogriff**.

## UNLOCK THE SECRET PLAYLIST

Aboard the **Hollywood Rip Ride RockIt** rollercoaster in **Universal Studios Florida**, riders are distracted from the 104 km/h speeds by singing along to a song they chose from a list of 30 tracks. Pro tip: Google the secret list of 60 additional songs (Wi-Fi is free at Universal) and memorize the code of your favourite hit. Take your seat and press the screen's coaster logo. After about 10 seconds, a keypad appears. Type in your three-digit code, press enter and get ready to rock 'n' ride. Universal's programmers have a sense of humour: Code 128 is U2's *Vertigo*.