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Itineraries

6-Day Universal Orlando Itinerary for Families

Published January 20, 2026



It is time for your **Universal Epic Universe** era! **Universal Orlando Resort's** fourth theme park is now open, elevating your theme park visit to a weeklong vacation. Visiting this sprawling resort with a family can feel overwhelming, but it can also be one of the most memory-making, stress-busting trips you'll ever take. With the opening of the dazzling, newest theme park, Universal Epic Universe, you now have the perfect "excuse" to return (or finally plan your first trip) and experience an entirely new world that will take your breath away. It is like stepping through a portal into a realm full of rich details with that "new car smell" still hanging over everything.

While Epic Universe is bright, shiny, and larger-than-life, the rest of Universal Orlando Resort will also wow you. My family of six, including four teenagers, spent six days at Universal Orlando Resort for our big family summer vacation. It was the perfect mix of family time and independence for the kids, and it led to some incredible memories I will always hold dear.

Check out our 6-day Universal Orlando Resort itinerary for families designed to help you experience all the fun without burning out.

Why Stay at a Universal Hotel?

Before we get into the nitty-gritty details, it is crucial that you understand the value of staying at Universal Orlando Resort. It is one of the best things you can do to make your trip more efficient and enjoyable.

Ease was one of the biggest perks of our stays at **Universal Helios Grand Hotel, a Loews Hotel** and **Loews Royal Pacific Resort**, our home bases for this trip. Florida weather is unpredictable – afternoon pop-up storms are as common as heat and humidity, so flexibility is valuable. By staying at a Universal hotel, it was quick and easy to go back and forth between the hotel and theme parks for a swim, a snack, or a short break if the skies opened up.

In addition to being close to all the action and the incredible theming and function of the hotels, there are four specific, key benefits for guests staying on select properties:

- 1. Universal Express Unlimited passes:** Three Universal Orlando hotels, **Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, Hard Rock Hotel**, and **Loews Royal Pacific Resort** offer complimentary **Universal Express Unlimited** passes, which are giant time savers. They let guests with valid theme park admission enjoy shorter wait times at select attractions in both **Universal Studios Florida** and **Universal Islands of Adventure**. The passes are valid for each day of your stay, including check-in and check-out days. This saved us so much money!
- 2. Early Park Admission:** Early Park Admission allows all hotel guests with valid theme park admission to enter up to one hour before the general public and access select attractions. At Epic Universe, early entry includes access to specific areas and attractions in **SUPER NINTENDO WORLD, Celestial Park**, and **Dark Universe**.
- 3. Complimentary merchandise delivery:** I love the ease of going shopping without having to shlep bags around all day from the Universal shops across the resort. This service brings your goodies directly to your hotel.
- 4. Free, easy transportation:** Universal Orlando hotels offer free water taxi and shuttle bus transportation, as well as walking paths to some of the theme parks. No matter which transportation mode you choose, your travel time will be about 10-20 minutes depending on your hotel and theme park destination.

Six-Day Universal Orlando Resort Itinerary for Epic Family Fun

Day 1 - Arrival at Hotel



After a 7-hour drive from Atlanta, we kicked things off at the stunning Universal Helios Grand Hotel, which impressed us from the moment we stepped into the heavenly lobby. It is not only adjacent to Epic Universe; it is inside the theme park! The immersive design is mind-blowing. It feels like stepping into another world. I could have sat in the golden, gilded lobby and stared at the gorgeous views of Epic Universe's Celestial Park for hours. But there was too much other fun to do!

We arrived at the hotel and got into our rooms right away! We spent the rest of the day decompressing from the trip and exploring the hotel, including the magnificent Mediterranean-inspired pool area, game room, and the well-equipped fitness center.



We had dinner at Helios's first-floor Mediterranean restaurant, [Flora Taverna](#). As we enjoyed our fresh-baked focaccia, flavor-brimming bucatini pasta, and perfectly-cooked seafood, we plotted our plan of attack for the next day's Epic Universe adventure. As our meal ended, we were surprised with a fantastic view of Cosmos, Celestial Park's otherworldly fountain show that mixes lights, water and music in an emotion-inducing closing ceremony. You have beautiful views of it from the restaurant's patio.

Key highlights of staying at Helios Grand Hotel:

- **Dedicated entrance:** Helios Grand Hotel guests with valid theme park admission can step right into Epic Universe through a dedicated entrance, which reduces a lot of hassle and feels very exclusive.
- **Smart rooms:** Every guest room has tablet-controlled automated room functions like lights, drapes, and thermostats. There are also tabs for information and learning about Universal properties. You can even order room service right from the tablet. The kids thought it was cool that they didn't have to get up to draw the blackout curtains or turn off the entry-way lights.
- **Family-friendly layout:** We stayed in connecting rooms, which is very helpful when traveling with kids. There were outlets and USB ports near the bed to keep everyone connected and other useful extras, like a mini fridge.

- **Extra upgrades available:** Looking to go big? Book a club-level room, theme park view suite, or a “How to Train Your Dragon” two-bedroom kids’ suite.

★ **Must-Do:** Book breakfast reservations for Flora Taverna at Helios Grand Hotel. Whether coming to enjoy the buffet or a la carte options, you can maximize your time with a reservation! If you’re looking for an easy grab-and-go breakfast, stop by [Aurora Market](#) instead.

Day 2 - Universal Epic Universe



Universal Epic Universe is everything its name promises. It is a kaleidoscope of colors, sounds and sights and full of over-the-top extraordinary fun. Even the grass and flowers dotting the landscaping feel thoughtfully placed.

Epic Universe is made up of five fantastical worlds: the central hub of Celestial Park, and four more worlds radiating out from it. Each one has immersive, unique and detailed dining, shopping and attractions:

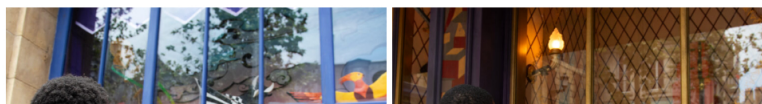
- **Celestial Park:** The nucleus of this theme park is a garden-like area with flowing water fountains and spectacular scenery. Take in this gorgeous area when riding the thrilling [Stardust Racers](#) coaster, with onboard soundtracks in your headrest. My teens couldn’t get enough of this smooth, exhilarating roller coaster.
- **SUPER NINTENDO WORLD:** SUPER NINTENDO WORLD was **one of our favorite parts of visiting Universal Studios Hollywood**, and now the exhilarating sights and sounds can be found in Central Florida! Ride [Mario Kart: Bowser’s Challenge](#) and explore with Power-Up Bands that let you play interactive games throughout the world. It’s a sensory explosion.
- **Dark Universe:** Brave [Monsters Unchained: The Frankenstein Experiment](#). The queue itself is worth it – scary, atmospheric, and air-conditioned. My 15-year-old son, who isn’t known for liking the horror genre, called it “scary but awesome.”
- **How to Train Your Dragon - Isle of Berk:** Lighten up your day with the sweet, intriguing live show [The Untrainable Dragon](#). My family then cooled off on [Fyre Drill](#), laughing until our sides hurt as half of us got drenched. [Hiccup’s Wing Gliders](#) is a fun, easy roller coaster that is gentler than others.
- **The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Ministry of Magic:** This intricately detailed world captures the charm of 1920s wizarding Paris perfectly! Don’t miss [Harry Potter and the Battle at the Ministry](#), my 16-year-old son’s favorite ride in the whole resort. He’s less of a thrill-seeker than my other kids and enjoyed that it wasn’t overwhelming yet still felt like an exciting adventure. Make sure to see the [Le Cirque Arcanus](#) show. My 18-year-old daughter loved the authenticity of the “tent” queue and how puppetry and live performers blended seamlessly. I also appreciated the air-conditioning and time to decompress while witnessing the show.

★ **Must-Do:** Stay until the official nightly closing time to view the evening fountain show in Celestial Park. It is gorgeous!

★ **Must-Do:** Experience Monsters Unchained if your family can handle scares – the theming is next-level.

★ **Family Tip:** Reserve your tickets and visit date in advance. All tickets, even single-day Epic Universe tickets, require selecting a date beforehand. If you’re an Annual Passholder, look for special pricing and events.

★ **Family Tip:** When you purchase a Power-Up Bands in SUPER NINTENDO WORLD, you’re not just getting a cool souvenir; they also let you participate in challenges like Koopa Troopa POWer Punch and other interactive games, collect digital coins/stamps, and compete with family for high scores!





★ **Family Tip:** For extra fun, try the [Second Generation Interactive Wands](#), which let guests cast spells with enhanced effects – like custom illumination and haptic vibrations unique to each spell – while exploring [The Wizarding World of Harry Potter](#). With Universal Play in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter through your [Universal Orlando Resort App](#), you can unlock more magic, spells, and adventures.

Day 3 - Loews Royal Pacific Resort & Universal Volcano Bay



For the second half of our trip, we moved to posh rooms at the Loews Royal Pacific Resort. This move was a great way to experience more within Universal Orlando Resort, as each hotel is unique. With its South Seas paradise vibe, Royal Pacific Resort wowed us with a blend of luxury and convenience. This lush tropical escape was a 10-minute walk from the entrances of Universal Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios Florida. The expansive pools, waterfalls, and private lagoons gave it an island-like feel.

As Royal Pacific Resort guests, we enjoyed the short walk and convenient water taxi ride to the theme parks, Early Park Admission, and exclusive amenities (such as the delicious, complimentary fruit popsicles we devoured at the pool). Our club-level rooms upgraded our stay with access to a well-stocked Club Lounge with food and drinks throughout the day and access to family activities, like board games and gaming consoles.

★ **Must-Do:** Walk the hotel grounds at night. Each hotel is so special. Helios' dome glows beautifully, and you can catch unobstructed views of Celestial Park. Royal Pacific Resort's torch-lit pathways, mixed with Florida's heat and humidity, give the feel of a tropical escape.

★ **Family Tip:** Hydrate early! From the beginning, plan to drink water constantly, wear breathable clothing, and seek shade to stay safe from the heat.

Today is the day to trade roller coasters for winding rivers and thrilling raft rides. [Universal Volcano Bay](#) is the most elevated water theme park I have ever experienced. It's a South Pacific-inspired oasis that allows you to cool off, while providing opportunities to relax or chase some thrills, whatever works for you.





Volcano Bay was the perfect mid-trip breather. We felt like royalty in our splurge-worthy second-floor cabana. It was invaluable when it rained for part of the afternoon. We stayed dry, eating our lunch delivered by our dedicated server and wrapped in our complimentary towels, until the showers passed.

Park highlights:

- **Krakatau Aqua Coaster:** The line is worth the wait for this exhilarating water ride, which is fun for all ages (even squeamish moms).
- **TeAwa The Fearless River:** This is what happens when a lazy river gets a little gumption. It is fast-moving and fun for all.
- **Waturi Beach Wave Pool:** Relax and let your inner child out on the beach with stunning views of Krakatau. Then take a dip in the Wave Pool to cool off and people-watch.

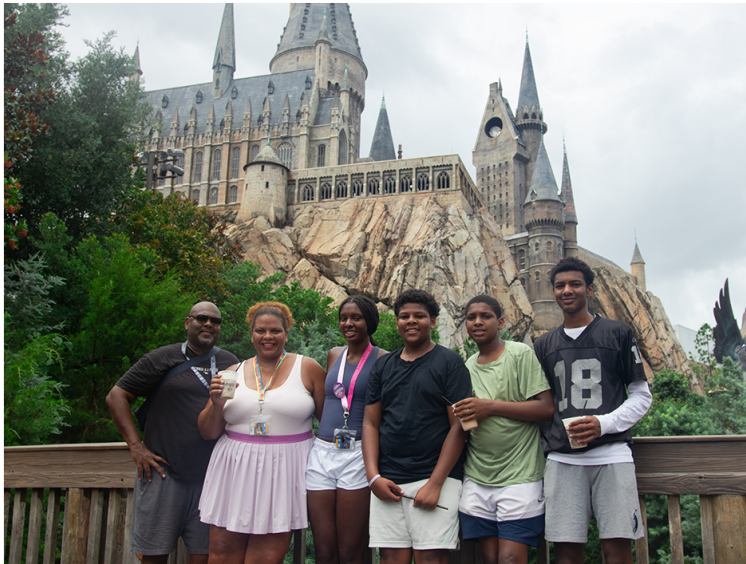
★ **Must-Do:** Ride Krakatau Aqua Coaster. It's more thrilling than you might expect, but still family-friendly.

★ **Must-Do:** Visit **Koka Poroka Ice Cream Kona** for the fruity, multicolored swirl of Waturi Fusion soft serve ice cream. It tastes as pretty as it looks!

★ **Family Tip:** Rent a cabana if possible; it makes the day far less hectic and gives everyone a designated "home base" for shade, service, and relaxation.

★ **Family Tip:** Our cabana server picked up our food and drinks. We didn't have to take a single extra step or spend a minute in line! My crew's winner dinner was the Jerk Shrimp Mac & Cheese at **Whakawaiwai Eats**. Opt for the combo option, which includes an Icee!

Day 4 - Universal Islands of Adventure



Day four is all about the thrills! Universal Islands of Adventure offers impressive, immersive storytelling that makes you feel like you've stepped into your favorite worlds. While Islands of Adventure was our day four focus, we liked to pop back and forth between the theme parks. Plus, having park-to-park tickets allowed us to ride the **Hogwarts Express** and easily travel between King's Cross Station in the London area of Universal Studios Florida and Hogsmeade Station in Universal Islands of Adventure. And since we have teens now, we even split up for a time so everyone could explore and find their favorites.





With the Florida sun in full effect, make sure to hit the water rides. We were able to cool off on [Jurassic Park River Adventure](#) and get absolutely soaked on [Popeye & Bluto's Bilge Rat Barges](#). Later, some kids spent time casting spells with their Second Generation Interactive wands in [The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Hogsmeade](#), while the others enjoyed [Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure](#) and [Flight of the Hippogriff](#).

Our preferred lunch spot in Islands of Adventure is the [Three Broomsticks](#) for delicious and hearty food. They even had vegetarian options for our daughter. Don't be deterred by a line – it moves quickly, and with the Universal Orlando Resort App, you can place your order while you wait. Plus, there is a spell location outside of the Three Broomsticks if you have an interactive wand.

Other favorites at Islands of Adventure include meeting some fierce dinosaurs at [Raptor Encounter](#), riding classics like [The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man](#) and [The Incredible Hulk Coaster](#), and experiencing my husband's favorite, the super smooth and exceptionally fast [Jurassic World VelociCoaster](#).

We capped the day with the new [Hogwarts Always](#) nighttime show, which transforms the castle on select nights into a stunning display of lights, music, and, of course, magic. This finale, which blended storytelling and spectacle, left me feeling moved. It was the perfect way to end the day.

✦ **Must-Do:** Ride the Hogwarts Express to travel between Hogsmeade in Universal Islands of Adventure and Diagon Alley in Universal Studios Florida and take a relaxing break. The Express Passes cut our time for this ride significantly – we saved so much time!

✦ **Must-Do:** Visit the legendary sweet shop, [Honeydukes](#) in Hogsmeade, for a delicious treat or snack. We tried Butterbeer in three ways here: fudge, jelly beans, and ice cream!

✦ **Family Tip:** Pack flip-flops or sandals if you plan to ride the water rides– your shoes will get soaked!

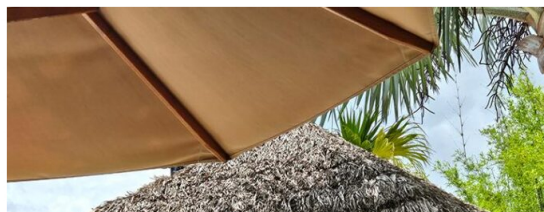
✦ **Family Tip:** Download the Universal Orlando Resort App, link your tickets, and create a Travel Party. You'll gain access to wait time alerts, park maps, and in-app extras.

Day 5 - Hotel Pool Day and Universal CityWalk



One of my favorite things to do when planning a visit to Universal Orlando Resort is to save one day for a pool day. We skip the theme parks and explore everything else the resort has to offer – and it is a lot! (It is helpful to have a day to rest my feet, too!)

We slowed things down with a pool day at Loews Royal Pacific Resort before heading to [Universal CityWalk](#) in the evening. We reserved a cabana on the pool deck, which is such a posh way to have fun at the pool (available for an additional cost). They even offer a concierge for only club level guests!





We splashed back and forth from the pool to the hot tub to the cabana, and later, my husband and I enjoyed some tasty frozen piña colodas. Many hotels at Universal offer poolside activities and events, including:

- Pool-side movies
- Poolside fire pits
- Water slides
- Lazy rivers
- Zero-entry beach-like atmosphere
- Giant lawn games like chess
- Pool volleyball and basketball
- Giant beach balls

For dinner, we headed to Universal CityWalk for [The Toothsome Chocolate Emporium & Savory Feast Kitchen](#), a perennial “must-do” on our Universal checklist. It is my favorite place to eat in all of Universal Orlando Resort. The wild mushroom chicken risotto is so good! Our kids adore the extreme milkshakes, especially the Red Velvet, which comes with a giant cupcake on top! Another great option is the lively [Antojitos Authentic Mexican Food](#). You won’t be disappointed ordering the tableside guacamole.

CityWalk isn’t just about the food, though. It is also an entertainment hub with fun and nightlife just steps from the parks. Families might consider catching the immersive escape experiences at [Universal’s Great Movie Escape](#). You can also play mini golf at [Hollywood Drive-In Golf](#) or see one of the newest blockbusters on one of the twenty screens at [Universal Cinemark](#). If live music is your thing, head over to [Hard Rock Live](#), [Jimmy Buffett’s Margaritaville](#) or [Bob Marley - A Tribute to Freedom](#).

Whether you’re winding down after a theme park day or making CityWalk your daytime destination, it’s the perfect place to eat, shop, play, and soak up Universal Orlando’s high-energy atmosphere.

★ **Family Tip:** Guests at Universal Orlando’s hotels (excluding Endless Summer) can also enjoy “pool hopping,” visiting other resort pools for a change of scenery and new activities.

★ **Family Tip:** For those with a sweet tooth as big as mine, visit [Voodoo Doughnut](#) for a delicious, unconventional treat you can bring back to the hotel for a morning (or late-night) treat.

★ **Must-Do:** Shop for exclusive merch at the [Universal Studios Store](#) or browse quirky finds at Rock Shop for that perfect souvenir.

★ **Must-Do:** On select nights, look for live mariachi performances at Antojitos Authentic Mexican Food to make the experience even more festive.

Day 6 - Universal Studios Florida + Wantilan Luau





There's a lot to get excited about at Universal Studios Florida. I especially love the live-action shows. **The Bourne Stuntacular** is one of my favorites because it is a little different every time I see it. The mind-blowing stunt performers, massive digital screens, and jaw-dropping special effects make it feel like you are in an action movie.

The kids like the high-energy attractions, like **Revenge of the Mummy** and **TRANSFORMERS: The Ride-3D**, competing against each other on **Villain-Con Minion Blast** or exploring the details and thrills of **The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Diagon Alley**, including **Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts**. Add new entertainment, like **Universal Mega Movie Parade** and, on select nights, the end-of-day **CineSational** nighttime spectacular, and your whole family will have a day of thrills, laughs, and Insta-worthy moments.



Our last dinner of the trip was at the **Wantilan Luau** at Loews Royal Pacific Resort. It was a completely unique experience filled with a colorful mix of music, dance, and Polynesian food. The extensive all-you-care-to-eat buffet (plus kids' buffet) was delicious. My husband loved the whole pit-roasted suckling pig, while my boys were thrilled with chicken fingers and pizza. The authentic Polynesian performances and costumes wowed me – especially the fire dancers from Samoa. How do they not get burned??



The Wantilan Luau takes place at Royal Pacific Resort outdoor pavilion every Saturday at 6 p.m. Hotel guests can book reservations through the hotel, or visitors can [book tickets](#) ahead of time. Those who

buy the premium ticket will be seated closest to the stage and receive a souvenir tiki mug. The show, dinner and drinks (including a selection of alcoholic beverages for 21+ guests), self-parking and gratuity are included with your ticket.

★ **Family Tip:** At the Wantilan Luau, grab food and drinks *before* the show starts so you don't miss a moment. Dinner service ends shortly after the show begins, and you do not want to miss all of the delicacies available.

★ **Family Tip:** If you are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, graduation or other occasion, let the host know when you check in. The celebrant may get a special shoutout during the show!

★ **Must-Do:** Arrive early for the best viewing of the Mega Movie Parade. Prime viewing spots include **Mel's Drive-In**, Hollywood Boulevard and the front steps of buildings in **New York**.

★ **Must-Do:** Eat for the 'Gram. Universal Studios has tasty, Instagram-worthy snacks like the Hot Fudge Sundae in a souvenir glass at **Florean Fortescue's Ice-Cream Parlour** or mugs of frozen Butterbeer (my favorite) in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and a multitude of **Minion-themed treats**.

Need a shorter Universal Orlando Resort itinerary? Read our [4-day itinerary here](#).

The Bottom Line on the Ultimate Universal Orlando Resort Family Vacation

Universal Orlando Resort has always been a blast for families, but with Universal Epic Universe now open, the experience feels grander, more immersive, and more impressive than ever. Pair the four theme parks with the flexibility of staying at a Universal hotel, plus the excitement of Universal CityWalk, and this is the ultimate family getaway designed to create memories to last a lifetime.

Ready for six days of nonstop enjoyment that your whole family will talk about for years? [Book your Universal Orlando Resort adventure today](#) and create memories that last a lifetime. Comment below and tell me which attraction or experience is at the top of your must-do list!

Must be 21 years and older with valid identification to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages.

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Maria Smith

Maria Smith is a wife, mom of 4 and freelance writer in Atlanta, GA. She shares family travel tips and tricks along with food, fun and finds for parents on her blog, [MamaliciousMaria.com](#).

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TONI-ANN TAYLOR

March 9, 2026 at 9:17 am

Is there a Boss Baby meet and greet or attractions!

[REPLY](#)



Digital Guest Communications

March 9, 2026 at 9:19 am

Hi Toni-Ann! There is not at this time, but you can find all of our current entertainment offerings here on our website via this link: <http://spr.ly/612586Dvx3!>

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