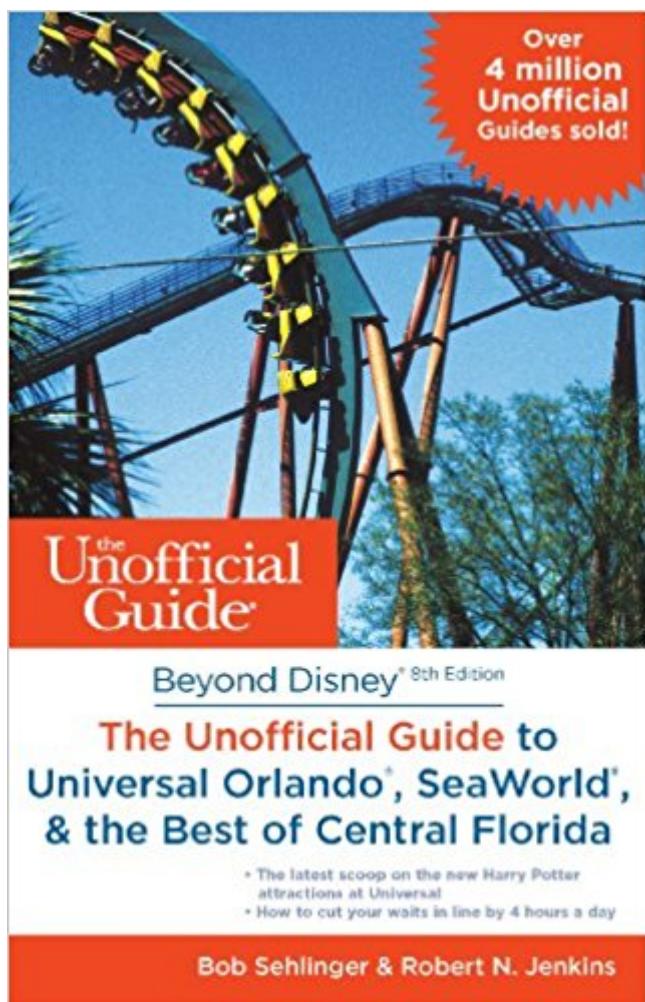


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# Beyond Disney: The Unofficial Guide To Universal Orlando, SeaWorld & The Best Of Central Florida



## Synopsis

Beyond Disney: The Unofficial Guide to Universal, SeaWorld, and the Best of Central Florida, by Bob Sehlinger and Robert Jenkins is a guide to non-Disney theme parks, attractions, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and nightlife in Orlando and central Florida. New features include the latest information on the new Harry Potter attractions at Universal Studios as well as step-by-step touring plans for Universal Studios and Universal's Island of Adventure. Complete chapters are devoted to the Universal parks, SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, Legoland, and the NASA Kennedy Space Center among others. Leading you step-by-step, it's the guide that puts you ahead of the crowd and keeps you there.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There's Another World Out ThereIf you think that central Florida consists only of Walt Disney World, you're wrong. What's more, you're passing up some great fun and amazing sights. Admittedly, it's taken a while, but Walt Disney World now has plenty of competition that measures up toe-to-toe. And though it may sound blasphemous to suggest a whole vacation in central Florida without setting foot on Disney property, it's not only possible but also in many ways a fresh and appealing idea. The big four non-Disney theme parks are Universal Studios Florida, Universal Islands of Adventure, SeaWorld, and Busch Gardens. Each is unique. Universal Studios Florida, a longtime rival of Disney's Hollywood Studios, draws its inspiration from movies and television and is every bit the equal of the Disney movie-themed park. Universal Islands of

Adventure is arguably the most modern, high-tech theme park in the United States, featuring an all-star lineup of thrill rides that make it the best park in Florida for older kids and young-at-heart adults. SeaWorld provides an incomparable glimpse into the world of marine mammals and fish, served up in a way that (for the most part) eliminates those never-ending lines. Finally, Busch Gardens, with its shows, zoological exhibits, and knockout coasters, offers the most eclectic entertainment mix of any theme park we know. All four parks approximate, equal, or exceed the Disney standard without imitating Disney, successfully blending distinctive presentations and personalities into every attraction.

Bob Sehlinger, a Lowell Thomas Award-winning journalist, is best known as the creator and producer of The Unofficial Guide series. He is credited with being the first to apply research techniques from the fields of operations research and statistics to travel guides. Among other projects, he was able to develop mathematical models that could save theme park patrons more than three hours of standing in queue in a single day. Bob Sehlinger is founder and co-owner of Keen Communications, a book publishing company that includes Menasha Ridge Press, Clerisy Press, and Wilderness Press. The author of 27 books, Sehlinger is a past president of the Publishers Association of the South, and has served at the invitation of the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Information Service on educational missions for publishers in Hungary, Romania, and Russia. ----- Robert N. Jenkins, a native of Washington, D.C., earned a B.A. in journalism at Michigan State University and after working "up North" for four years, he moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he still lives. In a 39-year career at the Tampa Bay (formerly St. Petersburg) Times, he served as editor of national news, state news, and features, and for 19 years, he was the travel editor. His work as travel editor won eight Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition awards. Since taking a buyout, Jenkins has been a freelance writer. His work has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, Toronto Star, San Francisco Chronicle, The Dallas Morning News, The Miami Herald, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, various AAA magazines, CruiseCritic.com, USAToday.com--and his former paper.

The Unofficial Guide's Beyond Disney tome is both comprehensive yet light on detail. Because each park is assigned only a single chapter (rather than the entire books devoted to Disney World) there isn't a lot of room to elaborate on touring strategies and plans, so this is mostly a series of summary reviews of the various parks, rides and restaurants around Orlando. This isn't a bad thing though, as even Universal Studios isn't nearly busy enough to require Disney-level preparation and planning,

although it would be good to see more of the anecdotes and stories littered through the other books in this series.

Unlike planning a trip to the land of the giant rodent, which seems to require a 4 year degree from a institution of higher learning, planning a trip to the rest of Orlando's attractions is actually relatively simple and stress-free. In fact, I am fairly confident that if my trip were to begin tomorrow, I could plan every detail today and not miss out on anything. This guide is every bit as good as the UG for Disney World and the layout is similar. Being a total Universal newbie, I wasn't sure where to begin because all we had ever done is Disney. Now, I am not only prepared for my first Universal trip, but I am excited as well.

This contains all the information that you need for your trip to the other attractions around Orlando, but its not as well done as their WDW Unofficial guides...The SeaWorld section omits, for example, any references to QuickQueue, or to SignatureSeating that would completely change your plan of attack. The Universal Orlando section spends an extraordinary amount of time discussing the attractions at the WWOHP but not giving you the straight forward touring plan information that you need. Their opinions about ExpressPasses interfere with the presentation of the information that you need about the passes first and foremost. I appreciate that this group is opinionated, but here it interferes with plain old straightforward information. At best, it allows you to read about the attractions and shows and decide what you want to see and what you do not need to see.

This series hasn't let me down yet! Can't go wrong and follow all their advice!

Love these Unofficial Guides. Lots of information (though not as much as the Disney version) in a straightforward manner.

Love these books! Have read several by the same author. Would definitely recommend to any one going to Orlando area.

Great guide to Universal Studios and LEGOLAND. The ratings were spot on - I especially liked how the rides were separately rated for different ages. Very useful before and during the trip.

Saves money and time

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