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Orlando Is Not A One-Mouse Town

So you're headed back to Orlando. Maybe the kids insisted. Maybe it's a business conference. Maybe you need to get your money's worth out of that timeshare investment. Or maybe the airfare deals to sunny Florida were just too good to pass up. But is there anything new left to do in Orlando on a second, third, or fourth trip?

"Absolutely," says Kelly Monaghan, author of **The Other Orlando: What To Do When You've Done Disney and Universal** (©2007, \$15.95; www.TheOtherOrlando.com), who in the book identifies more than 200 attractions and things to do outside Disney World and Universal Orlando. "And the list keeps growing and changing," Monaghan says. Monaghan began tracking the "other" Orlando in 1994 and has his own list of favorites, must-dos, and hidden gems.

"Discovery Cove has to be the most exhilarating experience in Orlando," Monaghan says. "Here you can swim with dolphins, snorkel with colorful tropical fish, and handfeed stingrays and exotic birds. It's the most expensive theme park in Orlando, over \$200 per person if you swim with the dolphins, but for most people it's the experience of a lifetime."

Monaghan adds that the cost of a day at Discovery Cove includes seven days of admission to nearby SeaWorld Adventure Park, home to Shamu, the world's most famous killer whale. Every day killer whales, dolphins, sea lions and even walruses perform in enormous water-filled stadiums for thousands of people. "I can't imagine a trip to Orlando without revisiting Shamu," says Monaghan. "Once you see a trainer soar into the air off Shamu's snout, you will know in that instant that you made the wrong career choice."

For those who tire of the mega-parks, and the mega-prices they charge, Monaghan can suggest a wealth of less expensive alternatives. "Gatorland is the original Orlando theme park," says Monaghan, "and it is still one of the most interesting." Guests can watch 'gators and crocs leap high out of the water to snare a meal or marvel at the courage of wranglers who wrestle 6-foot 'gators into submission. In the spring, Gatorland's alligator breeding marsh is alive with nesting herons and egrets that use the alligators below as a sort of security system for their chick-filled nests. "Gatorland is especially popular with foreign tourists," Monaghan notes.

Monaghan takes special delight in shattering preconceptions about Orlando. "A lot of people think that Orlando is a cultural wasteland," he says. "But it has an arts scene that would be the envy of many cities. Art is everywhere. Even

—more—

More 'Hidden' Gems of the *Other Orlando*

- **Winter Park Scenic Boat Tour.** A leisurely voyage past homes of the rich and not-so-famous.
- **The Holy Land Experience.** A tour of Jerusalem without the danger.
- **Historic Bok Sanctuary.** A fairy tale tower in a magical woods.
- **Baseball Spring Training.** Tomorrow's stars at yesterday's prices.
- **Stallion 51.** Pilot an authentic World War II Mustang fighter.
- **Reptile World Serpentarium.** See cobras and rattlers milked for their venom.

Orlando's City Hall has an art gallery." The Morse Museum in nearby Winter Park boasts the world's largest collection of Tiffany glass and, in Orlando itself, the Mennello Museum showcases folk art.

There is also an active theater scene. "Disney World and Universal Orlando attract a lot of talent and these folks are constantly looking for ways to exercise their abilities," notes Monaghan. There are many Off-Broadway style theater companies, ballet, opera, an improvisational comedy club, and the Orlando Shakespeare Festival, which presents the works of the Bard of Avon in its brand new, three-stage theater.

"Of course, the most popular form of theater in Orlando is the dinner show, where you are served a big meal while being entertained," Monaghan says. The diversions include elaborate horse shows, jousting knights, pirate battles, Prohibition-era gangsters, Broadway musicals, and comic mystery shows where the audience gets to figure out whodunnit.

So what is Monaghan's favorite Orlando attraction? "I love going to Wekiva Springs, which is in the northern suburbs of Orlando," he admits. "There's a crystal clear spring there, which is a constant 72 degrees year 'round, set in a forest dripping with Spanish moss. It's magical."

The Other Orlando covers all of Orlando's non-Disney and non-Universal attractions in its 320 pages, from larger parks like SeaWorld, to go kart tracks, sporting events, and shopping. The book also features chapters on Busch Gardens in Tampa, Cypress Gardens in Winter Haven, and the Kennedy Space Center on Florida's Atlantic coast. Monaghan provides updates to the book at www.TheOtherOrlando.com/blog.

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To request a review copy of *The Other Orlando*, to arrange an interview with Kelly Monaghan, or for any additional information, please contact Alexis Elder at The Intrepid Traveler at 203-469-0214 • alexis@intrepidtraveler.com • fax 203-469-0430
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**The Other Orlando:
What To Do When You've Done
Disney & Universal**
by Kelly Monaghan

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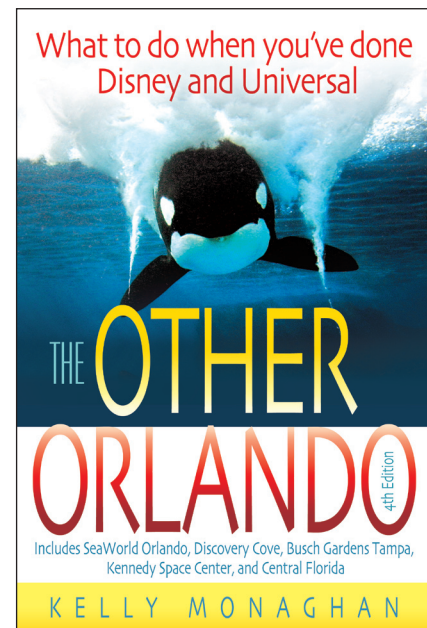
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Index to Rides & Attractions

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The Other Orlando is available in bookstores nationwide, from online bookstores, by calling 203-469-0214 or by visiting www.TheOtherOrlando.com
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