

Unexpected Cultural, Heritage and Natural Treasures Flourish in Orlando

***The following information is courtesy of the Orlando Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Just steps from the fireworks, roller coasters and elaborate shows of Orlando's world-famous theme parks, an entirely different array of attractions awaits visitors. Orlando's artistic community is flourishing, drawing talent and inspiration from the area's rapidly diversifying population. Thanks to the cultural renaissance that has taken hold of the area in recent years, visitors and residents have ever increasing options for satisfying their creative and intellectual appetites.

From the vivid palettes of folk artist Earl Cunningham's work at the Mennello Museum of American Art to the ceramic, jade and silver artifacts of the Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando's visual arts offerings span different time periods and disciplines. With a growing independent gallery scene, Orlando also provides opportunities to view experimental art projects and the work of undiscovered artists.

If the performing arts are what visitors crave, they will delight in the fact that Orlando boasts a professional opera, ballet and philharmonic orchestra. The area is also home to a thriving theater community, offering everything from Shakespeare and theater for young audiences to original plays by local writers.

For those looking to discover a bit of old Florida, natural and man-made wonders offer a trip back in time. The Orange County Regional History Center, located in a historic 1920 courthouse, documents the area's history with an array of permanent and traveling exhibits. African-American history in Central Florida comes to life at the Wells' Built Museum of African-American History and the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts. In addition to history museums, guests can take a step back in time by visiting one of the area's numerous state and national recreation areas. Old Florida is alive and well thanks to the extensive wildlife and natural preservation programs working to safeguard Orlando's natural environment for future generations to enjoy.

For one-stop culture experiences, visitors should plan to visit Orlando's Loch Haven Park, covering 45 acres (18 hectares) and serving as the region's premier cultural park. Museums and theaters abound in this area including the Orlando Science Center, Orlando Museum of Art, Mennello Museum of American Art, Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando Philharmonic, Orlando Repertory Theatre (featuring family friendly productions) and the Orlando Shakespeare Theater, In Partnership with UCF.

Travelers with an appetite to experience the broad spectrum of arts and culture Orlando offers should be sure to take part in ArtsFest, a multi-day event each February featuring cultural samplings for every taste and pocketbook. From moving ballet and opera to cutting-edge film and art exhibits, this festival highlights Central Florida's best of the best. Those who may not be here in February can still find arts packages that appeal to

them though Orlando Arts Getaway, the source for perfect getaway packages for Orlando-area arts and cultural destinations. Discount packages may include the performance/event, hotel and dining.

Just minutes from Central Florida's world-famous theme parks, the Unexpected Orlando® awaits visitors of all ages with opportunities to engage the mind, body and senses. From lush gardens and art classes to ecotours and dance performances, Orlando offers something for the budding artist in everyone. Here are some highlights:

Museums

Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, showcases nearly 200 of his works in the Czech sculptor's home, galleries and a 3-acre (1.2-hectare) garden in Winter Park.

polasek.org; 407-647-6294

Casselberry Art House is a cultural arts facility housing a unique gallery and art classroom. It has a full schedule of classes, special events and exhibits.

casselberry.org; 407-262-7720

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, located on the northern end of Winter Park's shopping district, is home to the world's most comprehensive collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany, as well as late 19th and 20th century American art. Visitors will delight in Tiffany jewelry, pottery, paintings, art glass, windows, lamps and an elaborate chapel interior created for a special exhibition in 1893.

morsemuseum.org; 407-645-5311

Cornell Fine Arts Museum, overlooking picturesque Lake Virginia at Rollins College in Winter Park, features European and American paintings, sculpture and decorative arts.

rollins.edu/cfam; 407-646-2526

The Mennello Museum of American Art, conveniently located in Loch Haven Park near other fine museums and performance houses, is best known for its extensive collection of vividly colored folk art by painter Earl Cunningham.

mennellomuseum.com; 407-246-4278

Orlando Museum of Art in Loch Haven Park features traveling exhibitions and permanent collections by Central Florida artists, American and international artists. The museum also offers lectures, art appreciation classes and special activities for children.

OMArt.org; 407-896-4231

Orlando Science Center boasts the giant CineDome movie theater, an observatory and hands-on exhibits for children of all ages.

orlandosciencecenter.org; 407-514-2000

Water Ski Hall of Fame and Museum in Polk City gives visitors the opportunity to spend a nostalgic afternoon traveling back in time to see how the pioneers innovated and changed the sport.

waterskihalloffame.com; 863-324-2472

WordSpring Discovery Center allows visitors to explore the history of the Bible, the world's languages and the ongoing work of Bible translation through interactive multimedia exhibits and presentations.

wordspringdiscoverycenter.com; 407-852-3626

Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts in Eatonville celebrates the works of the noted African-American writer, folklorist and anthropologist, and other works by artists of African descent.

zoranealehurston.cc; 407-647-3307

Galleries

Anita S. Wooten Gallery, located at Valencia Community College East, is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art and provides a forum for displaying diverse collections of visual art by regional artists.

valenciacc.edu/gallery; 407-582-2298

CityArts Factory, a new multi-use arts venue located in downtown Orlando, houses five separate art galleries, a classroom, a public artist's studio and 8,000 square feet (743 square meters) of event and performance space.

cityartsfactory.com; 407-648-7060

City Hall of Orlando—Terrace Gallery features Florida artists and traveling exhibits throughout the year.

cityoforlando.net/arts; 407-246-4279

COMMA Gallery in Orlando focuses on showcasing contemporary and original fine art by national and regional artists.

commagallery.com; 407-376-1400

Crealdé School of Art in Winter Park offers changing fine art exhibitions, free educational exhibitions and one of the largest contemporary art sculptures in Florida. In addition to regularly scheduled classes, the school offers one-day workshops.

crealde.org 407-671-1886

Gallery on First is located in downtown Sanford and offers visitors the opportunity to learn from and interact with working artists in open studio space.

galleryonfirst.com; 407-323-2774

Grand Bohemian Gallery offers the finest in original and contemporary artwork including paintings, photography, sculpture, glass, jewelry and one-of-a-kind gifts.

grandbohemiangallery.com; 407-581-4801

Inspirational Living Fine Art Gallery, located near The Mall at Millenia, features work from more than 30 artists from around the world.

artgalleryorlando.com; 407-248-8848

Jamali Fine Art features the mystical expressionist works of artist Jamali. The collection includes original paintings, bronze sculptures, limited editions and photography.

jamali.com; 407-629-6308

Maitland Art Center, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, features changing exhibitions, concerts in the garden, a lecture series and numerous special events, including a Children's Art Festival.

maitlandartcenter.org; 407-539-2181

Millenia Fine Art in Orlando offers paintings by Picasso, Chagall, Chihuly and others, as well as works by distinguished contemporary artists.

milleniafineart.com; 407-304-8100

Suz Letzig Gallery in Orlando features original art, Giclée and limited edition prints. The gallery also offers on-site Giclée and screen printing.

suzletziggallery.tripod.com; 407-896-7422

Timothy's Gallery in Winter Park, a "Top 100 Gallery of American Craft" winner, awarded by the American Craft Council, since 1997, features the works of more than 300 award-winning artists with jewelry, art, furniture, ceramics and more.

timothysgallery.com; 407-629-0707

University of Central Florida Art Gallery features the work of students and faculty and periodic shows of special collections and nationally-recognized artists.

art.ucf.edu; 407-823-3161

Theater and Music

Annie Russell Theatre at Rollins College in Winter Park hosts four theatre productions and one dance production each season featuring students as well as local and national professional talent.

rollins.edu/theatre; 407-646-2145

ArtsFest is a cultural sampling for every taste and pocketbook. From moving ballet and opera to cutting-edge film and art exhibits, this festival highlights Central Florida's best in arts and culture. Held annually in February.

unitedarts.cc; 407-628-0333

Bach Festival Society of Winter Park offers a broad range of performances through its Choral Masterworks Series, Visiting Artist Series, Fred Rogers Family Series and annual Winter Park Bach Festival.

bachfestivalflorida.org; 407-646-2182

Blue Man Group, the colorful performance troupe known for its vibrant mixture of percussion and comedic theatrics, performs at Universal Orlando Resort.

universalorlando.com/bmg_overview.html; 407-363-8000

Central Florida Ballet features performances of Russian-based ballets, including the annual "Nutcracker."

centralfloridaballet.com; 407-849-9948

Cirque du Soleil in Downtown Disney West Side comes alive with surreal sets, live music and high-energy choreography; the show includes gymnasts, acrobats, dancers and clowns.

cirquedusoleil.com; 407-939-7600

Enzian Theater is Central Florida's oldest full-time, nonprofit alternative cinema. Patrons can sit back and enjoy some of the best independent films while dining on great food. The theater produces six annual film festivals.

enzian.org; 407-629-1088

Festival of Orchestras offers a permanent concert series in Orlando featuring five or more internationally acclaimed symphony orchestras each season. Upcoming performances include the Royal Philharmonic, State Symphony of Mexico and State Symphony of Russia.

festivaloforchestras.org; 407-539-0245

Florida Film Festival is held each spring and shows some of the best American independent and foreign films. Produced by Enzian Theater, the festival has been ranked eighth in the U.S. by the *Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide*.

floridafilmmfestival.com; 407-644-6579

Florida Music Festival is a three-day celebration of up-and-coming musicians held in May in downtown Orlando. It was recently ranked among the top 25 best music festivals in the Southeast by *Creative Loafing Atlanta*.

floridamusicfestival.com;

Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra provides talented young student musicians with orchestral experience and audiences with the opportunity to watch.

fsyo.org; 407-999-7800

JCC Center Players is an adult community theater that produces plays and musicals, some of which have Jewish content.

orlandojcc.org; 407-645-5933

Jester Theater Company is Orlando's all-comedy theater dedicated to putting its special brand of humor into Jester Theater original plays and nationally recognized works.

jestertheater.com; 407-927-5043

The JESUS Film Project is located at the world headquarters for Campus Crusade for Christ. Visitors can take a tour of the facility and learn how the latest technology simulates translation of the movie into 890 languages.

jesusfilm.org; 407-826-2300

Mad Cow Theatre, a young but distinguished theatre company entering its 10th year, presents award-winning contemporary and classic plays and musicals in an intimate setting in downtown Orlando.

madcowtheatre.com; 407-297-8788

Orlando Arts Getaway is the source to finding the perfect getaway packages for Orlando-area arts and cultural destinations. Discount packages include the event, hotel and dining.

orlandoartsgetaway.com; 407-872-2382

Orlando Ballet is Central Florida's only fully professional ballet company with 24 national and international dancers. The season runs October to May with 2008 performances including "Pirates of Penzance!" and "The Sleeping Beauty."

orlandoballet.org; 407-426-1733

The Orlando Chorale is a 60-voice choir of professional and experienced singers from Central Florida under the direction of Gregory Ruffer.

theorlandochoirale.org; 407-786-8624

Orlando International Fringe Festival is 10 days of theater, music and frivolity each May in downtown Orlando. The oldest, non-juried fringe festival in the United States, the festival offers more than 500 performances by local, national and international artists.

orlandofringe.org; 407-648-0077

Orlando Opera presents world-class productions with live music by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and English translations projected above the stage. Celebrating its 51st year in 2008, the opera will feature

performances of “Die Fledermaus” and “Turnadot.”

orlandoopera.org; 407-426-1700

Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Central Florida’s resident orchestra, presents several series each season, including its “Phil at Carr” series with noted international soloists and the popular Darden Family Series.

orlandophil.org; 407-770-0071

Orlando Repertory Theatre at Loch Haven Park in Orlando’s “Cultural Corridor” presents family friendly professional theater based on classic and contemporary children’s literature.

orlandorep.com; 407-896-7365

Orlando Shakespeare Theater, In Partnership with UCF, a non-profit professional theater company, features Shakespeare classics, contemporary plays and theater for young audiences year-round in a permanent home at Loch Haven Park.

shakespearefest.org; 407-447-1700

Orlando Theatre Project is Central Florida’s longest-running professional theatre company and presents off-Broadway-style productions.

otp.cc; 407-491-1397

People’s Theatre, Inc. is a multicultural theater that celebrates the diversity of our communities through quality community theater.

peoplestheatre.org; 407-426-0545

Pinocchio’s Marionette Theater is a professional marionette company performing original versions of children’s classic fairy tales and stories for audiences of all ages.

pinocchios.net; 407-677-8831

Playwrights’ Round Table in Longwood features readings and productions of original works for stage and screen by professional actors and directors.

playwrightsroundtable.org; 407-788-8468

SAK Comedy Lab offers original and improvised comedy shows performed by a professional staff of improvisational comics at its 200-seat theater in downtown Orlando.

sak.com; 407-648-0001

SunTrust Broadway Across America - Orlando brings national Broadway touring shows to the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre in downtown Orlando. Upcoming 2008 touring productions include “Wicked,” “Monty Python’s Spamalot” and “The Drowsy Chaperone.”

broadwayacrossamerica.com; 407-950-4647

Theatre Downtown offers an eclectic mixture of productions in downtown Orlando.

theatredowntown.net; 407-841-0083

Winter Park Playhouse is an intimate, professional theatre specializing in musicals with live musicians and comedies from Broadway and Off-Broadway.

winterparkplayhouse.org; 407-645-0145

Heritage

Bradlee-McIntyre House—Central Florida Society for Historic Preservation offers guided tours of the 1885 Queen Anne-style, three-story, 13-room winter vacation cottage. It is the only surviving late-Victorian cottage in Orange and Seminole counties.

407-332-0225

Central Florida Railroad Museum in Winter Garden has a collection of local and national railroad memorabilia such as dining car china, a 1938 Fairmont motor car and a Clinchfield railroad caboose.

wghf.org; 407-656-0559

Historic Waterhouse Residence & Carpentry Shop Museum in Maitland was built in 1884 by pioneer settler William H. Waterhouse and gives visitors a look at middle-class life in Central Florida during the late Victorian period.

maitlandhistory.org; 407-644-2451

Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Central Florida, a multimedia educational experience, includes a museum, library and gallery chronicling the events of the Holocaust.

holocaustedu.org; 407-628-0555

Maitland Historical Museum and Telephone Museum features changing exhibits tracing the area's history from its early Native American residents to current citizens and civic organizations. The Telephone Museum showcases a collection of telephones and related memorabilia.

maitlandhistory.org; 407-644-2451

Museum of Seminole County History in Sanford offers visitors a chance to travel back in history through a collection of antiques, vintage photographs and exhibits of early agriculture and transportation in Seminole County.

seminolecountyfl.gov; 407-321-2489

New Day Enterprises offers ethnic heritage group tours of the area, highlighting local landmarks, streets and structures named in honor of African-Americans.

407-245-7535

Orange County Regional History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in downtown Orlando, explores 12,000 years of the area's rich history with interactive exhibits, artifacts, archives and special shows.
thehistorycenter.org; 407-836-8500

Sanford Museum traces the history of the city through the personal articles of its founder, Henry S. Sanford. A lawyer, diplomat and citrus production innovator, his library, manuscript collection and art collection allow visitors an inside look at matters of diplomacy and commerce during the late 1800s.
ci.sanford.fl.us; 407-302-1000

Scenic Boat Tour, a local attraction for more than half a century, takes riders along Winter Park's historic chain of lakes and connecting canals - a 12-mile (19-kilometer) cruise through the "Venice of America."
scenicboattours.com; 407-644-4056

Wells' Built Museum of African-American History, one of just a few remaining lodging stops on the famed Chitlin Circuit, features exhibits, artifacts and memorabilia of African-American artists and musicians who entertained in downtown Orlando.
pastinc.org; 407-245-7535

Winter Garden Heritage Museum offers visitors a trip back through West Orange County's past with exhibits of memorabilia, citrus labels and antique photos from the area's pioneer days.
wghf.org; 407-656-5544

Winter Park Historical Association and Museum is located at the north end of the historic farmers market. In addition to exhibits of pictorial history, collectibles and memorabilia, the museum offers a walking tour of the city's downtown district.
winterparkhistorical.com; 407-647-8180

Withers-Maguire House and Museum in Ocoee is on the National Register of Historic Places and gives a glimpse of life in 1888. The home features original furnishings and rare burl and pine woodwork that was typical in that time period. Open only on weekends.
407-656-2051

The Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities is held annually in January and celebrates the life and work of noted African-American author and folklorist, Zora Neale Hurston, a native of Eatonville.
zorafestival.com; 800-972-3310

Parks, Gardens and Zoos

Bill Frederick Park at Turkey Lake, the City of Orlando's largest park, is a 178-acre (72-hectare) natural park located near Orlando's major tourism area. Pavilions, boats, cabins and RV campsites are available for rent.

cityoforlando.net; 407-299-5581

Blue Spring State Park, home of the largest spring on the St. Johns River, is a designated refuge for a growing population of manatees. The spring's warm waters are also popular with swimmers, snorkelers and scuba divers.

floridastateparks.org/blue-spring; 386-775-3663

Brevard Zoo features more than 165 species from North and South America, Australia and Africa. Unique animal encounters like giraffe feedings allow visitors to get a closer look at some of the zoo's more exotic animals.

brevardzoo.org; 321-254-9453

Central Florida Zoo offers hundreds of animal encounters through its fine collection of rare wildlife. Visitors can view cheetahs, elephants, leopards and exotic snakes in the zoo's lush tropical environment.

centralfloridazoo.org; 407-323-4450

De Leon Springs State Park offers a variety of activities for outdoor enthusiasts. From hiking trails and narrated boat tours to swimming, canoeing and bird-watching, this state park offers endless opportunities to experience natural Florida.

floridastateparks.org/deleonsprings; 386-985-4212

Fort Christmas Historical Park is a park and museum in one, with a replica of the original fort built on Dec. 25, 1837 during the second Seminole Indian War and a "Living History" community of seven pioneer homes restored to their original condition.

nbbd.com/godo/fortchristmas; 407-568-4149

Gatorland offers visitors a trip back to the swamps of old Florida. Known as the "Alligator Capital of the World," the park features thousands of alligators, crocodiles and exotic birds.

gatorland.com; 407-855-5496

Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando is a 50-acre (20-hectare) botanical park with the largest camellia collection in eastern North America and includes the Leu House Museum, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

leugardens.org; 407-246-2620

Historic Bok Sanctuary in Lake Wales features Fredrick Law Olmsted-designed gardens, a 204-foot (62-meter) tower and a majestic 60-bell carillon.

boksanctuary.org; 407-676-1408

Hontoon Island State Park is a remote and rustic getaway accessible only by boat or park operated ferry. The island offers boating, fishing, canoeing and overnight cabins and camping accommodations for visitors.

floridastateparks.org/hontoonisland; 386-736-5309

Lake Eola Park in downtown Orlando covers 43 acres (17 hectares) with a walking trail, café, a 23-acre (9-hectare) lake with swan paddleboats and a recently remodeled playground for children.

cityoforlando.net; 407-246-2827

Lake Louisa State Park, just a short drive from Orlando in Clermont, boasts six sparkling lakes and scenic landscapes. In addition to camping and fishing, the park offers more than 20 miles (32 kilometers) of hiking trails and 15 miles (24 kilometers) of horse trails.

floridastateparks.org/lakelouisa; 352-394-3969

Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge offers excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, hiking, bicycling, photography and fishing. The refuge is a haven for rare species including manatees, bald eagles, indigo snakes, gopher tortoises and American alligators.

fws.gov/lakewoodruff; 386-985-4673

Little Big Econ State Forest offers activities including hiking, camping, biking, horse trails, canoeing on the Econ River. The forest is home to many species, including gray fox, river otter, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, bobcat, waterfowl and woodstorks.

fl-dof.com; 407-971-3500

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is home to more than 500 species of wildlife, 15 of which are listed as federally threatened or endangered. Recreational areas within the 140,000-acre (56,655-hectare) refuge include hiking trails, fishing spots, an auto tour route, and a manatee observation deck.

fws.gov/merrittisland; 321-861-0667

Moss Park/Split Oak consists of 3,351 acres (1,356 hectares) of natural Florida forest and wildlife nestled between Lakes Hard and Mary Jane. The park offers camping, boating, fishing, swimming, hiking and picnicking.

407-273-2327

Sebastian Inlet State Park, famous for its fishing and surfing, offers three miles (4.8 kilometers) of beaches for swimming, scuba diving, snorkeling and shelling, as well as the Indian River Lagoon for canoe and kayak enthusiasts.

floridastateparks.org/sebastianinlet; 321-984-4852

SouthPort RV Park Campground & Marina is a natural paradise located on West Lake Toho in Kissimmee. With recreational vehicle and tent site accommodations, the park is perfect for quiet getaways of wildlife viewing and fishing.

southportpark.com; 407-933-5822

Tomoka State Park is a bird-watcher's paradise. More than 160 species have been sighted along the park's nature trails. The park is also home to a history museum featuring art, wildlife displays and Native American

artifacts.

floridastateparks.org/tomoka; 386-676-4050

Wekiwa Springs State Park in Apopka offers 7,800 acres (3,157-hectares) with a natural spring for swimming, canoes for rent and an opportunity to experience the natural environment of the area's Timacuan Indians.

floridastateparks.org; 407-884-2008

Outdoor Adventures

A-Awesome Airboat Rides offers 90-minute guided tours of Florida's wetlands. Day and night tours are available on small airplane engine-powered airboats.

airboatride.com; 407-568-7601

Airboat Rides "Old Fashioned" have licensed captains with 30 years of expertise providing a real wildlife experience with views of alligators, bald eagles and more.

airboatrides.com; 407-568-4307

A Pro Bass Guide Service, Inc. provides full- and half-day fishing trips with a bass guide in a pro bass boat on Florida lakes.

probassguideservice.com; 407-877-9676

Big Toho Airboat Rides in Kissimmee allows visitors to view alligators in a modern day airboat.

firststrikebass.com; 321-624-2398

Black Hammock Adventures offers family friendly viewing of natural Florida on the waters of Lake Jessup.

theblackhammock.com; 407-977-8235

Bob's Balloon Charters LCC will come directly to your area to offer a customized balloon ride. Enjoy panoramic views of the lakes, wildlife and skylines.

bobsballoons.com; 407-466-6380

Boggy Creek Airboat and Wildlife Safari Rides, with two locations in Kissimmee, takes riders through Florida wetlands for a look at native wildlife.

bcairboats.com; 407-344-9550

Florida Eco-Safaris at Forever Florida offers visitors of all ages a chance to discover wild Florida through its eco-safaris, guided horseback tours, petting zoo and nature trails.

floridaecosafaris.com; 407-957-9794

Florida Dolphin Tours & Transportation offers manatee and dolphin swimming adventures for all ages.

floridadolphintours.com; 407-352-5151

Fun 2 Dive Scuba and Manatee Tours provides manatee tours, full-day scuba diving and snorkeling excursions.

fun2dive.com; 407-322-9696

Grand Cypress Equestrian Center is a British Horse Society-approved equestrian center located at The Villas of Grand Cypress Golf Resort.

grandcypress.com; 407-239-1938

Grand Lakes Outfitters offers private, guided eco-tours of Shingle Creek and lessons at the Orvis-endorsed fly fishing school.

grandelakes.com; 407-393-4900

Horse World Riding Stables is a 750-acre (303-hectare) working ranch in Kissimmee featuring trail rides for the beginner, intermediate and advanced rider.

horseworldstables.com; 407-847-4343

Island Boat Lines offers daily ecotours of the Cocoa Beach 1,000 Islands, home to herds of manatees, flocks of birds and playful dolphins.

islandboatlines.com; 321-454-7414

Incentive Fishing Charters by Captain Bruce Alcock in Melbourne offers anglers of all skill levels the secrets of 30 years of local experience during private charters for up to six people.

incentivecharters.com; 321-676-1948

Indian River Queen, a 99-foot (30-meter) triple deck paddle wheel boat, offers relaxing Friday night sunset dinner cruises along Florida's Space Coast.

islandboatlines.com; 321-454-7414

Premier Boat Tours, LLC sets sail daily for tours of the Dora Canal and surrounding waterways. Passengers enjoy the peaceful shade of the area's majestic cypress trees as they spy turtles, otters and herons in their natural environment.

352-343-5608

Magic Sunrise Ballooning lets visitors take flight for new perspective on the area's attractions and expansive landscape.

magicsunriseballooning.com; 866-606-7433

Orlando Balloon Rides offers one-hour sunrise balloon rides followed by a traditional champagne picnic.

orlandoballoonrides.com; 407- 894-5040

Rivership Romance has daily lunch cruises and weekend dinner cruises. Relax and enjoy nature in air-conditioned comfort while cruising the historic St. Johns River.

rivershipromance.com; 407-321-5091

Wallaby Ranch Hang Gliding Flight Park teaches guests to hang glide 2,000 feet (610 meters) from the ground. No experience is necessary.

wallaby.com; 863-424-0070

West Orange Trail in Winter Garden is Orlando's longest paved bicycle trail, 19 miles (30.5 kilometers) through fields, forest canopies and the towns of Winter Garden and Apopka, part of the nationwide Rails to Trails program. Bicycles and rollerblades are available for rent.

dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/regions/eastcentral/trails/west_orange.htm; 407-877-0600

Westgate River Ranch offers a wide array of activities for visitors hoping to experience the yesteryear of Central Florida. From horseback riding and guided nature hikes to fishing, swimming and hayrides, visitors will find their inner rancher on the grounds of the Westgate River Ranch.

wgriverranch.com; 863-692-2913

To obtain a copy of the "*Unexpected Orlando*" Guide or for more information about Orlando, visitors should call 1-800-367-1496 or visit orlandoinfo.com. The guide may also be downloaded at orlandoinfo.com/unexpected. While in Orlando, visitors may stop by the Official Visitor Center located at 8723 International Drive, at the southeast corner of International Drive and Austrian Row. The Official Visitor Center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (closes at 4 p.m. on Thanksgiving, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 and is closed Dec. 25).