

>city pick: orlando, florida



Orlando! It's Electric!

The latest attraction in Orlando won't have you riding out twisters, zapping alien monsters or plunging 12 stories down a water slide. But you will be thrilled by the money you'll save and the good that you'll be doing for the environment when you rent an electric car on your next trip to the most-visited city in the United States.



More than 56 million visitors go to Orlando every year, making it the world's largest rental car market. So Visit Orlando, along with major hotels, theme parks and other partners, joined forces to launch Drive Electric Orlando this fall. Enterprise Rent-A-Car has a fleet of Nissan Leaf vehicles, which drive just like a regular car. While Enterprise and Hertz offer

electric car rentals in other locations, this is the first citywide initiative to promote the use of electric cars.

While the cost to rent the car for a week is the same, the average fuel cost for a mid-size car is around \$50 compared with \$15 or less to rent the plug-in electric car. An even bigger money saver is that many hotels are offering free parking for electric cars, putting another \$5 to \$20 (or more!) in your pocket each day.

The Nissan Leaf has a range of around 100 miles and there are more than 300 charging stations in the metro area at the major attractions as well as at hotels. No worries if you need to charge it on your own — it's as easy as plugging in your cell phone. Many places offer free charging but if there is a fee, it's around \$3 — less than a gallon of gas!

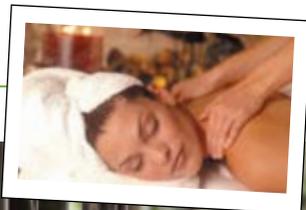
Oh, and the car comes with a free GPS so you'll easily find your way between all the attractions, and maybe even find the nearest spa. You have to do something with all that money you save, right? —Jan Schroder www.driveelectricorlando.com

Travelgirl Picks

Whether we are looking to de-stress with a stone massage, relax at one of the many luxury resorts or browse through the wide array of shops, the staff at *Travelgirl* puts Orlando at the top of our places to return to again and again. Here are our top 15 picks for places to spa, stay and shop:

SPA

- Buena Vista Palace Hotel & Spa
- Guerlain Spa at the Waldorf Astoria Orlando
- Mandara Spa at Loews Portofino Bay Hotel
- Relâche Spa at Gaylord Palms Resort
- The Spa of Thornton Park



STAY

- Animal Kingdom Lodge
- Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes Orlando
- Waldorf-Astoria Orlando
- Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek
- Loews Portofino Bay Hotel



SHOP

- Lake Buena Vista Factory Stores
- The Mall at Millennia
- Orlando Premium Outlets
- Thornton Park boutiques
- Downtown Winter Park



PHOTO BY KEN LOPEZ



Sarah Sekula: The best thing about Orlando is that there is always something new and unusual to do. Take, for example, **Orlando Aerial Arts**, where aerial silks classes have participants dangling from the ceiling Cirque du Soliel-style. Or **Orlando Circus School**, where trapeze and trampoline lessons are popular (I'm working on mastering a double-back tuck right now). On weekends, I love harnessing my inner Martha Stewart by taking cooking classes at **Truffles and Truffles** in the trendy College Park area. It's been attracting foodies for nearly 30 years, if that tells you something. And when I just want a good chuckle, I head to **SAK Comedy Lab**, where improv greats like Wayne Brady got their start. Interestingly enough, my work as a travel writer takes me around the globe, but making a beeline back home to the "City Beautiful" makes me just as content. www.sarahsekula.com



Debi Lander: I love Orlando theme parks. The best part of any **Disney** day comes at the end – the nightly fireworks and light show projected on Cinderella's Castle. My favorite ride remains the Forbidden Journey through Harry Potter's castle at **Universal**. Afterward, I like to grab a mug of Butterbeer at the **Three Broomsticks**. My holidays aren't complete without strolling through **ICE**: the hand-carved frozen village at **Gaylord Palms**. For a romantic Orlando stay, I'd pick the **Courtyard at Lake Lucerne**, an historic B&B. My fave hip, piano bar is the **Bösendorfer Lounge** tucked into the **Grand Bohemian Hotel**, best Italian is **Christini's Ristorante Italiano**, and for healthy gluten-free: **Ethos Vegan Kitchen** in nearby Winter Park. www.bylandersea.com



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