

TOURISM YEAR IN REVIEW



GEORGE AGUEL

President & CEO, Visit Orlando

New attractions, significant expansions and strong global marketing propelled our destination to new heights in 2019, keeping Orlando No. 1 for leisure and business travel.

And what a year it was!

Our industry saw major progress on several fronts, including new experiences at our theme parks, 50 million passengers at Orlando International Airport, a rapidly growing lodging base and record collections of Tourist Development Tax.

At Visit Orlando, we helped drive this success through efforts spanning sales and marketing, publicity, convention services, member relations and other core functions. By supporting Orlando's No. 1 economic engine, we proudly enhanced the value tourism brings to our community.

As we close out 2019, here's a fun look back at some of the year's biggest news from Visit Orlando and our tourism industry. Happy holidays, everyone. We'll see you in 2020!



Booming Hotel Growth

Between 2019 and 2020, our destination is on pace to add nearly 9,000 hotel rooms, the largest growth spurt in the past two decades. Two of this year's biggest additions include Universal's Endless Summer Resort: Surfside Inn and Suites (pictured) and the Gran Destino Tower at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort.

75 Million Visitors!

At our annual luncheon in May, we announced that Orlando achieved a record number of visitors in 2018, keeping us the most visited destination in America. Our publicity team capitalized on the momentum by generating 1.3 billion global media impressions about the big news.



"Enhancing Amazing"

To promote the Orange County Convention Center's \$605 million expansion (completion in 2023), Visit Orlando rolled out our largest-ever advertising campaign aimed at the meetings and conventions industry. We call it "Enhancing Amazing" and it's building momentum around Orlando as a world-class business destination.



360° Virtual Tours

Visit Orlando reimaged our consumer and meetings websites to be highly visual, mobile-first platforms that better showcase Orlando's many offerings. One of the coolest new features: 360-degree virtual tours that spotlight over 100 attractions and locations.



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Marketing & PR Campaigns

Strong year-round campaigns elevated Orlando's visibility with consumers in key markets — such as the Northeast U.S., Canada, Brazil and the United Kingdom — setting the stage for what would become another record year in collections of tourist development tax.



Visit Orlando magical dining

Our 14th annual foodie event was a resounding success, with a record 125 restaurants. One dollar from every meal benefited the National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Orlando and Lighthouse Central Florida.

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

Walt Disney World® Resort opened its highly anticipated new land, beckoning fans to fly the *Millennium Falcon* and live out their own *Star Wars* stories. With the franchise's staying power, *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* promises to be a force for years to come.



Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure™

Universal Orlando Resort launched its most immersive rollercoaster ever, taking riders deep into the Forbidden Forest surrounding Hogwarts™ castle. The company also revealed plans to build a highly immersive and innovative theme park, Epic Universe, on property south of Sand Lake Road and east of Universal Boulevard.

Sesame Street Land™

Sesame Street has enchanted and educated young children for decades. In March, the world-famous street came to life at SeaWorld® Orlando. Families can now take a stroll through the iconic neighborhood, reconnecting with friends like Big Bird, Elmo and Cookie Monster.



50 Million Passengers

Orlando International Airport hit 50 million passengers on a rolling 12-month basis, and visitors made up 70% of that total. The airport's multi-year, \$4.2 billion Capital Improvement Program continued making major strides to keep up with demand.

Promoting Orlando in London

Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings joined Visit Orlando to promote our destination at World Travel Market in London, appearing on BBC and CNN and taking part in a standing-room-only presentation for international trade media.



\$75.2 Billion Economic Impact

Visit Orlando released new data revealing that tourists infused \$75 billion into our local economy in 2018, a 6.4% increase over the previous year. Tourist spending also generated \$5.8 billion in local and state taxes.

MORlando Challenge

Ten years ago, it took 67 days to experience all of Orlando's attractions, but how much longer would it take today? Our MORlando Challenge team went on a mission to find out. This month, we'll reveal the final number.

