

## YAHOO! TRAVEL

## Harry Potter theme park expanding in Orlando and beyond

By Bekah Wright | Compass – 22 minutes ago



The Flight of the Hippogriff coaster in Orlando. (Photo: 2013 Universal Orlando Resort)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter-Hogsmeade (WWHP) is expanding, not only at its original home base of [Universal Orlando Resort](#), but at Universal's theme parks in [Hollywood](#) and [Japan](#) as well.

Targeted for a 2014 opening in Universal Studios Florida is Diagon Alley, named after the magical London shopping district initially mentioned in "Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone," the first installment in J.K. Rowling's book series.

Diagon Alley joins WWHP, which was established at neighboring Universal Islands of Adventure in 2010. Visitor enthusiasm for The Wizarding World of Harry Potter immediately resulted in double-digit attendance increases. "We quickly realized we had so many more stories to tell, so many more experiences to create for our guests," Tom Schroder, VP of corporate communications for Universal Orlando Resort, told Yahoo! Travel. "An expansion seemed so natural for us."

Potter immersion at WWHP has occurred via tours of Hogwarts castle with stops to Dumbledore's office, the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom and the Room of Requirement. A ride takes visitors above school grounds, giving a peek into Harry's mystical world. Other attractions include shopping in Hogsmeade and dining at the Three Broomsticks. What Diagon Alley holds in store -- themed shops, a restaurant and a ride set inside Gringotts Wizarding Bank.

(See also: [Perks of the VIP theme-park pass](#))

Visitors will be able to traverse between the two parks and their Potter-themed experiences via Hogwarts Express train, something Universal considers history-making. "To our knowledge, this is the first time an experience such as this has been started in one theme park and continued in another," says Schroder.

The Harry Potter theme park attractions are a collaborative effort between Universal Studios Theme Parks and Warner Bros. Entertainment, the studio, which released the Harry Potter films. At long last, Harry will find a Los Angeles home with the opening of a WWHP at Universal Studios Hollywood.

The WWHP attraction will take its place where the Gibson Amphitheatre currently stands. Final performances will occur through early September, after which time it will be dismantled. The groundbreaking and construction of WWHP is set for this summer. A completion date will be announced once construction is underway.

As for Harry's foray into Japan -- stay tuned. In the meantime, "As word of our expansion has spread, we've seen the same rush of excitement from fans and others that we saw years ago," says Schroder. "People continue to be excited by the adventures of Harry Potter. And we can't wait to share the rest of the story with them."

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