

# SeaWorld San Diego Halloween Spooktacular: Disneyland & Southern California Attractions

by Randy Crane, PassPorter Guest Contributor

When most travelers to Southern California think of Halloween at a theme park, they think of Knott's Scary Farm (at Knott's Berry Farm), Mickey's Halloween Party (at Disneyland Resort), or Halloween Horror Nights (at Universal Studios).

Often overlooked, though, is SeaWorld San Diego's Halloween Spooktacular.

Running on weekends from September 29- October 27, this event has several elements that make it a worthwhile choice to consider if you live in, or plan to visit, Southern California during the weeks leading up to Halloween. I have personally experienced it for the last two years, and I'm looking forward to doing the same this year. Here are just some of the reasons why.

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## □ Themed Shows

□ As they do for the summer and Christmas seasons, SeaWorld themes some of their shows for Halloween. In Clyde & Seamore's Spooky Adventure, the sea lions, O.P. Otter, and their human friends visit Uncle Schmedley's Castle. This show has all the same goofy humor as the regular show, with a haunted flair.

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□ The other themed show is Pirates 4-D, the story of a hapless pirate crew and its captain, which replaces the regular Sesame Street 4-D show. As with the Sea Lion & Otter Show, the scares are mild and more humor than horror, but the large screen, 3-D movie, and in-theater effects could make this scary for smaller children.

## Unique Characters

□ You may not realize it, but SeaWorld has its own characters, and the number of characters multiplies like crazy at Halloween. Along with Shamu, O.P. Otter, and others as walk-around characters, at Halloween we're introduced to Capri and Allure (mermaids), pumpkinfish, Ms. Scrumptious, Miss Calamari, Lifesaver Lilly, and Fineus Fudge.

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□ Perhaps my favorite character meeting event and show is Sesame Street's Countdown to Halloween. On the stage in Sesame Street Bay of Play, Count Von Count, Elmo, Abby Cadabby, and other Sesame Street friends put on a special Halloween stage show, full of music and

audience participation.

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□Of course, the most unique characters at SeaWorld are the animals, and at this time of year, guests who visit the Animal Connections area get to meet some spooky -- and some less-than-spooky -- animals, with trainers there to teach guests about them and dispel some myths surrounding them.

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□A Family-Friendly Maze

□Newly added last year is one of my favorite themed activities, "The Search for Captain Lucky's Treasure." At its core, this is a maze, but SeaWorld has done a great job of making it a fun, lighthearted, walk-through adventure. Avoid "pirate traps" as you search for the treasure hidden in Deadman's Cave. There may be a couple of jump-moments here, but in the time I spent exploring and watching, the Team Members did an excellent job of observing and adjusting to the guests so it was never too scary for anyone.

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□Trick-or-Treating

□What would Halloween be without trick-or-treating? SeaWorld San Diego has set up 13 stations around the park, each with a different kind of treat. Last year, we got everything from M & M's to a gummy-bear-like candy to Planters peanuts. You don't have to be in costume to get the treats, though I'm sure it helps. I suggest going once earlier in the day to make sure you get something from each station, but if you have a favorite one or two, go back 15 minutes or so before the trick-or-treating ends (at 6:00 p.m.). When we did that last year, the Team Member at the peanut station offered us as many bags of peanuts as we could carry.

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□Perhaps best of all, everything I've written about here and more are included with your Sea World admission. That's right, none of this is separately ticketed or even an add-on to your day's ticket. So if you're looking for a Halloween event at one of the Southern California parks, move SeaWorld high up on that list. It's great for kids, who can come in costume which makes for some great interactions and adorable photos, and even for adults who want fun but not scary.

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