

# New Adult Beverage Offerings at Animal Kingdom: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Heather Macdonald, *PassPorter Message Board Guide* (Moderator)

A strange phenomenon has taken root at Walt Disney World.

I can't say when it started, only that I noticed a very small change in the carts and stands located around Animal Kingdom very recently. It started when I noticed that a stand had been erected outside of the stadium for Flights of Wonder. Today, as I began my trek towards Asia and the Expedition Everest single rider line, I noticed another and then another until I had what would have been, before the digital age, a whole camera roll of snack cart and small eatery menu changes. These aren't just any menu changes either. These are adult menu changes. Specifically they are frozen adult beverage menu changes.

Epcot no longer has a corner on the adult beverage market. It appears that the popularity of Drinking Around the World and the added revenue from including specialty cocktails at the Food and Wine Festival and Flower and Garden Festival food booths caught someone at Walt Disney World's attention. Perhaps it was the ongoing debate over which French frozen martini is superior on the message boards that brought the concept to the forefront. Maybe it was the multiple letters I sent to the Guest Concerns email address about the need to remove the apple flavor from the Fiesta Margarita in the Mexico Pavilion that finally got someone in development thinking. (You'll notice that the apple flavor is, indeed, gone from the Fiesta Margarita.) Whether it was me, or the fact that Disney must have sold hundreds of thousands of rum infused Dole Whips during this year's Flower and Garden Festival, doesn't really matter. The fact is that the frozen cocktail has moved out of World Showcase and taken it's show on the road.

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□The first stop for new frozen concoctions is Animal Kingdom Park. There have always been places to get both adult and kid friendly frozen beverages at Animal Kingdom. The Dawa Bar in Africa has both specialty cocktails and frozen drinks. It's one of the best places to relax in AK, the entire area is shaded. Yak and Yeti Restaurant has always sported both an indoor full bar and an outdoor bar with beer and two frozen favorites: the Yak Attack and the Imperial Margarita. Kid friendly frozen drinks have been available for purchase at the frozen Coke stand called Anandapur Frozen Beverages or the Royal Anandapur Tea Company as long as I can remember.

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□ I noticed the Frozen Cocktails sign hanging over a booth near the entrance to Flights of Wonder on a trip a few months ago. I noted then that they were serving three different flavors of margarita and a layered version, just like the stand in the Mexico Pavilion. Here, however they sport cool names like Bali Hai Strawberry Margarita. I now know that this stand has a name, it's called Upcountry. They also offer a non-alcoholic version called a Shangri-La Berry Freeze. You can also purchase Kingfisher Lager, which is a beer produced in India. (You can also get a Bud Light, but we're not going to do that, ever, okay?)

Today, as I took the right hand turn around Discovery Islands towards Asia, I happened to look at the first snack stand I passed. (Not the ice cream carts, when I say stand or booth, I mean there is a physical building.) It was the Discovery Island Popcorn Stand. There the regular menu includes soft drinks, the ubiquitous Bud Light and popcorn. A tiny little sign was propped in the corner advertising two adult beverages: Island Margarita and Island Punch, each for \$8.75. I thought it was interesting, but I'm very glad I didn't stop for one, as I would later discover. You should skip this one too! (First because it's not frozen and second because I'm about to make a very important discovery, just wait two paragraphs.)

□ At the very next location along the trail, The Discovery Island Pretzel Stand, which is home to both the Mickey Pretzel and the Jalapeño and Cheese-Stuffed Pretzel, I discovered another change. The menu now offers a Frozen Mango Rum Lemonade, but mango isn't truly my favorite, so I kept walking. The real food location along this path is called Beastly Kiosk. While you can get a corn dog, you can't get a cocktail, not even a Bud Light. I kept walking.

□ I journeyed past the new Adventurer's Outpost, where you can now meet Minnie and Mickey. I almost gave in and stopped at Quality Beverages for a Yak Attack, but I held my ground and didn't give in to temptation. I had to find the rest of the adult beverages.

□ After my trek up Forbidden Mountain I continued towards Dino Land. This is where I discovered a small cart set up as both a ice cream cart and a rolling bar. This bar serves two specialty cocktails as well as the beer that shall not be named and Kingfisher. The cocktails have cool names: Gupta's Pomegranate Punch and Golden Expedition Margarita. That's when I saw it. Oh the horror! The "cocktails" were being poured out of widely known and universally available pre-mixed cocktail bottles. You know which ones I'm talking about . . . They come in those big handles in the liquor store . . . Just add ice and poof! Instant margarita and in this case Pomegranate Punch as well. Yuck! Go back to the Discovery Island Popcorn Stand and I'm sure you'll find the same two

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bottles. Skip these in favor of the three options coming next.

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□At Dino Diner in Dinoland I discovered another frozen beverage on the menu. Here you can have, and I almost certainly will on my next trip, a Frozen Bacardi Raspberry Lemonade. Why am I going to try this one? First, they have called a recognizable name brand liquor. I like to know what I'm actually getting. Second, I really like non-alcoholic raspberry lemonade, so I'm sure this will do nicely. Around the corner at Trilo-bites, which now serves Turkey Legs instead of French Fries, you can order a Frozen Mango Blueberry Rum Lemonade. This doesn't sound like a huge seller to me, but maybe I'm wrong and mangos and blueberry are an ideal combination.

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□Finally I made my way over to Africa, where neither Bradley Falls or Mr. Kamal's have been given the frozen treatment, but they are right next to Upcountry. I hit the jackpot at Kusifari Bakery and the beverage cart next to it. First the cart--no Bud Light in sight, instead a beer label I'd never seen before. It's called St. George Beer and the label features George slaying the famous dragon. The coolest part? It's made in Ethiopia. At Kusifari I found a treat I probably won't be trying until next December, but at least I know it's there and it sounds wonderful. It's an Amarula Schokeleti or a hot chocolate spiked with Amarula liqueur. Amarula is a liqueur made from the marula fruit in South Africa. I hope you find a new cocktail to enjoy on your next trek to Animal Kingdom Park! Good luck and Happy Drinking!

*About The Author: Heather Macdonald is a PassPorter Message Board Guide who recently relocated to the Orlando area.*

Article last updated: 07-26-2013

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