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## Yes, I Waited 6 Hours in Line for a New Theme Park Ride

By Emma Gisclair  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, December 4, 2019

I'll always remember the day's outing — not just because of the four-minute ride — but also because of the whole shared experience with other fans.



(Photo courtesy of @Marcelo21Andrade/IG)

You may have seen it on the news this past summer—eight-hour-long lines to experience Orlando's newest theme-park ride. I was one of those people, waiting six hours on the second day the ride was open.

Maybe that's an absurd thing to do—six hours for a ride that lasts maybe four minutes—but I can honestly say it was worth it. Not because the ride itself is worth a six-hour wait, but because the experience is something I'll always remember.

I arrived 10 minutes after Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure opened and the line was already wrapped around half the park. I'd been in the line for 15 minutes when employees informed us that the ride we were waiting for—Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure—wouldn't open for another two and a half hours. Some families left to enjoy the rest of the park, the line became (a little bit) shorter, and we waited.

It was my day off, I had no other plans. I could have stayed home and binged something on Netflix, but instead I was outdoors and on my feet. I was armed with sunscreen, water and an e-book on my phone. I had one goal for the day, and I was prepared to see it through.

The first couple of hours passed by uneventfully, the line moving forward occasionally as people gave up. Employees passed out bottles of water as the sun moved overhead. News helicopters whirred above us. Families took turns using the bathroom; people scrolled through social media or played games on their phones.

But around hour three, things started to change. The ride opened and the line started moving at a steadier pace. Excitement charged the air. And people began to talk to each other. I quickly got to know the families on either side of me—in front, two teenage girls, cousins from different states whose families were on vacation together, and behind, a mom and her adult children from England. We talked about their time in Orlando and my upcoming trip to London, shared our love for Harry Potter and our expectations for the new ride.

We held each other's spots in line when someone needed a food or bathroom break, commiserated when a sudden downpour left us drenched, and kept track of the hours we'd been in line. Snacks and handheld fans were passed around the group. A game of "Heads Up!" kept us occupied when the line came to a half-hour standstill due to a ride malfunction. And when we finally made it to the front of the line, we got to share our excitement as well.

Afterwards, no one in our group expressed regret at spending most of their day waiting for one ride. We loved the ride, which of course contributed to our satisfaction, but more importantly, I think we all felt like we'd been a part of something. We were those ridiculous people you read about on Facebook. We'd sacrificed most of our day, survived the sun and rain, and made it to the reward at the end. I think the anticipation, the camaraderie and shared enthusiasm, made the ride even better.

Then we went our separate ways. We didn't share Instagram handles or friend each other on Facebook; I don't remember any of their names. Our paths will probably never cross again, but we shared this experience, these memories.

And that was absolutely worth the six-hour wait.

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