

Knott's Berry Farm

Yes, it did all begin with a farm.

Back in 1920, Walter and Cordelia Knott came to Buena Park and started a small, 20 acre berry farm. It became Knott's Berry Place in 1928 when they built a permanent building to serve as a berry stand and tea room. Despite some success in the propagation of the boysenberry, money got tight as the depression hit and they needed another source of income, so, in 1934 Cordelia reluctantly began serving chicken dinners in the tea room on her own wedding china.

The chicken was a hit. By 1937 they built a full-fledged restaurant, and soon they had thousands of customers lining up to get in -- so many that Walter began to look around for some way of keeping them entertained while they waited. In 1940 he moved the Old Trails Hotel to the Farm from Prescott, Arizona -- the first of many old buildings that he would relocate or replicate to form his own ghost town. He added "The Covered Wagon Show," a cyclorama, to the hotel's lobby and the farm had its first themed attraction.



In the 1950's more buildings and more shows were added to what was now known as Knott's Berry Farm. In 1952 Walter bought the entire the Denver and Rio Grande railroad and moved it to the farm where it was reborn as the Ghost Town & Calico Railroad, the park's first ride.

Since then the park has continued to grow, developing into one of the world's premier theme parks (Knott's Berry Farm won the Amusement Business/Liseberg Applause Award in 1988, only the fourth park so honored.) After the deaths of Cordelia and Walter the Knott family carried on as managers until 1997, when the park was acquired by [Cedar Fair, L.P.](#), which has continued to expand and improve the park.

They don't grow berries here anymore, but they sure do manufacture fun.

Knott's Berry Farm is open every day except Christmas. Hours vary -- for the latest information on hours and ticket prices check their [website](#) or call the park at (714) 220-5200.

The park is located in Buena Park, California, right on Beach Boulevard -- the park is on one side of the street, parking (yes, there is a parking fee) is on the other side. An underpass connects the two sections.

The park is divided into six themed areas:

- **Ghost Town**, incorporates the original western buildings as well as their latest roller coaster, Ghostrider.
- **Indian Trails and Wild Water Wilderness** are two smaller areas that celebrate Native American culture and the Pacific Northwest.
- **Fiesta Village**, where the flavor is distinctly one of Old Mexico.
- **The Boardwalk**, which is, like, totally beachin', dude.
- and **Camp Snoopy**, a place where younger kids can hang out with the Peanuts comic strip gang.

There's also:

California Marketplace, offering shopping and dining outside of the park, including that World Famous chicken dinner restaurant.

Knott's Berry Farm: Ghost Town

This is the section that started it all, and many of the original relocated ghost town buildings are still here among others that are reproductions of actual western structures. This isn't done in scale -- the buildings really were that small. One look at the reproduced Jersey Lilly saloon makes you suspect that Judge Roy Bean hung people because there was no room to fit them inside.

Many visitors race down the dusty street in a hurry to get to the rides, but take a slow stroll through these relics and you'll begin to get a feeling for what the real old west was like. You'll also stumble onto some interesting shops and displays including a Western Museum tracing the USA's westward migration. And you can also pan for real gold, too.



Blacksmiths, Woodcarvers, a Spinner and Storytellers populate Ghost Town and demonstrate authentic crafts and spin tall tales. You might also run into cowboys and gunslingers fighting it out in the streets. For a Ghost Town, this is a pretty active place.

Ghostrider. Yeehaw! This CCI designed wooden roller coaster ranks with the best I've ridden, delivering plenty of airtime as well as hurling you around fast, high lateral force turns. Not a ride for the timid, Ghostrider has 4,533 feet of that out-of-control wildness you expect from a classic woodie, and then some. A spectacular ride, especially at night when the cool of the evening combines with warmed-up track to provide an all out run.

Don't let a short line going into the building deceive you that the wait inside is necessarily short -- the queue winds through both stories, and this is the park's most popular ride.

Calico Mine Ride. Not a mine-train roller coaster, as the name might suggest, this is a slower train ride through a mountain filled with animated miners and scenes of gold rush life. This was Knott's first attempt at a Disneyland like ride but, while amusing, it's no *Pirates of the Caribbean*. It does, however, end with a bang.

Timber Mountain Log Ride. It's a great classic log flume ride through an attractive mountain scene. Although one of Knott's older attractions, having just celebrated its 30th Anniversary, it's aging quite well.

Ghost Town Calico Railroad. This is an authentic old narrow gauge steam passenger train, relocated to Knott's. The cars are the real thing, although the modern bus-like seats inside detract somewhat from the old western feel, as does the back-of-a-warehouse scenery through part of the trip. There is only the one station -- you get on and off at the same point. Be warned: this line has the highest crime rate of any railroad in the country, so don't be surprised if some desperate, and often funny, bandits attempt to rob the train.

Butterfield Stagecoach. It's a real, horse-drawn stagecoach ride around the park.

Haunted Shack. This "mystery spot" style gravity defying house is one of the oldest attractions here, but it's still fun. Your wisecracking guide walks you through a mysterious shack where water runs uphill, chairs balance precariously on walls, and bad jokes abound. For a sample of the humor you're about to be subjected to, check out the barrel in the waiting area warning you of its dangerous "Baby Rattlers".

Hunter's Paradise Shoot'in Gallery. First opened in 1955, this electronic shooting gallery has been firing away ever since. (Extra Charge).

Knott's Wild West Show. Stunts, action, and comedy combine in Knott's version of the theme park stunt show.

Calico Saloon. Grab a sarsaparilla and enjoy the music, dancing girls, and corny jokes in this old fashioned revue.

Some of the most interesting eating inside the park is in Ghost Town, too. **Fireman's Brigade Barbecue** serves BBQ chicken and ribs in an outdoor, festive atmosphere. **Auntie Pasta's Pizza Palace** finds Italian fare (and the occasional Italian) transplanted to the old west, and both the **Calico Saloon**

and **Silver Dollar Saloon** serve snacks. Other restaurants serving fast foods, snacks, funnel cakes, Mrs. Knott's chicken, and their signature Boysenberry punch, are scattered throughout the area.

Ghost Town also offers plenty of shopping opportunities that include hand crafted items, western apparel, toys, candy, and, of course, Knott's Berry Farm jams and jellies.

Knott's Berry Farm: Indian Trails and Wild Water Wilderness

Indian Trails

Cowboys may rule Ghost Town, but Native Americans get their due in this section of the park. Here you can explore authentic Tipis, Hogans, and Big Houses representative of Native American tribes from California and other parts of the southwest. There are also more unusual structures like the bottle house, an example of recycling 1800's style.

Indian Trails Stage. Native Dance and Music performances are staged here by authentically costumed Native American and Aztec dancers, singers and musicians.

Knott's Totem Pole. Said to be the world's largest totem pole made of incense cedar, the Knott's Totem tells the story of the growth of the American West and Knott's Berry Farm, too.

The best Native American themed attraction at Knott's, however, is technically located in the near-by Wild Water Wilderness.

Bottle House-Indian Trader offers authentic Native American arts and crafts as well as other educational merchandise. **Tafoya Silversmith and Turquoise Pavilion** is the place for beautiful Native American jewelry.

Food service is strictly snacks and fast food, but check out the Indian fry bread and roasted corn, and those popular funnel cakes.

Wild Water Wilderness

Head for the mountains of Northern California -- without ever leaving the park.

Pine trees and mountain streams capture the feel of the High Sierra in this fairly small section that is home to two of the park's major attractions.

Mystery Lodge. This beautiful and subtle show, designed by Knott's and [BRC Imagination Arts](#), respectfully tells the legends of the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest in a way that is nothing short of magical.

The Old Storyteller relates the tales of his ancestors to us by the light of his campfire. It's that simple. But, perhaps, if you listen carefully, and you contemplate the smoke from the fire, you may begin to see images of that of which he speaks.

Most theme park shows use their special effects to dazzle you, overpower you, or amaze. Mystery Lodge is amazing, yes, but charming as well, and the effects are used wisely to support the stories, not to overwhelm. It's not only a beautiful show, but it's also good theater. Bravo, Knott's and BRC.

Bigfoot Rapids. Get ready to get wet on this raging white water rapids river raft ride through a mountainous landscape themed to the forests of the Pacific Northwest. And, you never know, Bigfoot himself may be hiding in those woods.

Ranger Station. A resident naturalist introduces guests to live insects and other area wildlife -- including the elusive Bigfoot.

Bigfoot Burgers is Wild Water Wilderness' requisite fast food restaurant.

The Mystery Lodge Store stocks a variety of Native American items. **Bigfoot Exporters**, right at the exit of Bigfoot Rapids, has towels and dry clothing (this is not a coincidence) and other souvenirs.

Knott's Berry Farm: Fiesta Village

California's Latin heritage is celebrated in this festive section, where you're likely to find your feet moving to the beat of a live Mariachi Band.

Jaguar! Well -- it's long. Jaguar is a nice, not-*too*-thrilling family roller coaster that winds out of the pyramidal Temple of the Jaguar and through a long and well landscaped course. There are no loops, mostly just a series of fast turns. Parents and their children can ride together, although tall adults might find themselves a bit cramped in the small trains.

Montezooma's Revenge. A short, but intense, shuttle loop from Schwatztzkopf, Montezooma's Revenge flings you (0 to 60 in 3 seconds) out of the station and right into a tight forward loop, then almost straight up into the sky -- but not for long, as soon you're hurtling backwards through the loop and the station and up another hill which reverses your course and returns you to the station. Remember to keep your head back against the headrest because, when it goes, it *moves!* And don't forget to breathe again when it's over.

Merry Go Round. It's a beautiful, 100-year-old Dentzel Carousel featuring 48 intricately hand-carved animals.

There's also a selection of pretty standard carnival rides, including the **Tampico Tumbler**, the **Gran Slammer** (a platform drop ride), **WaveSwinger** (circle swing), **Dragon Swing** (pendulum boat ride), and the **Hat Dance** (a teacup style spinning ride).

Jaguar Adventure Fountain is an eye-catching water shooting gallery featuring animated Aztec and Mayan themed target. **Casa Arcada** features the usual selection of coin swallowing video games, and there's also several carny style games located here.

Church of Reflection. It looks like a simple, lakeside country church, which is what it often is as hundreds of weddings are held here every year.

The lake is also home to **Edison International Electric Nights**, their big nighttime multimedia extravaganza.

Fiesta Village is the place to get Mexican foods, at the **La Cocinita** buffett, the **Cantina**, or one of several other fast food outlets in the area.

Shoppers can find a large selection of souvineers and Snoopy stuff at **Casa California**, or choose from a wide range of candy available at **Joe Cool's Sugar Shack**.

Knott's Berry Farm: The Boardwalk

There's no actual beach here, but you'd never guess that from the seaside amusement pier style of the Knott's Boardwalk. Parts of it still have a 1920's feel (the area began as the Roaring 20's section), but there are hints of the rockin' 50's and the 1960's California surf craze now, as well as pure 1990's high tech thrill machines.

Supreme Scream. This ride features three terrible towers -- all of them raise you 254 feet up for a great view of the park, then shoot you back down at more than 50 miles an hour until you bounce to a stop.

Boomerang. It's your typical Vekoma Boomerang -- it fires you through a loop and a boomerang inversion both forward and backwards. You can watch from the sidelines and then decide if you want to give it a try.

Windjammer. A colorful and unique racing steel looping roller coaster that can be fun when they do actually run both tracks.

Kingdom of the Dinosaurs. Here's a ride you didn't find on the average boardwalk -- a time machine. This elaborate dark ride takes you progressively back in time, back beyond the ice age to the age of dinosaurs. Since it's an unfinished time machine, there's no guarantee you'll make it back to the present, however. It's a little on the cheesy side, but a nice effort. The **Dinosaur Discovery Center** can show you a thing or two about real dinos.

More carnival-type rides add screams to the ambiance: **HammerHead** (which turns you upside down and spins you every which way), **HeadSpin** (a Himalaya type ride), **HeadAche** (an indoor Scrambler ride), and, of course, the **Bumper Cars**.

The Sky Cabin takes you up the old Sky Jump tower for a slow, panoramic view of the park. (The Sky Jump is no longer operating).



Good Time Theatre. This is a great place to be when the afternoon sun starts to get to you -- and the show, Snoopy's America on Ice, featuring Snoopy and the other Peanuts comic strip characters on skates, isn't bad either. Shows change for seasonal events so check your show schedule.

Nu Wave Theatre. Shows here also vary seasonally. Again, your show schedule.

Carny games as well as the video and redemption games at **Surf City Food and Fun** and the **Buffalo Nickel Arcade** also keep the boardwalk atmosphere going while they relieve you of your quarters. **Lazer Invaders** is a high-tech laser tag game (extra charge).

The food here also fits the boardwalk theme with burgers, hot dogs, submarine sandwiches, pizza, and other fast foods the order of the day at **Coasters**, the **Glider Diner**, the **Hollywood Beanery**, and other 1950's themed restaurants.

For shopping beyond the usual souvenirs, visit the Charleston Circle shops: **Candy Cottage** (candy made fresh right here), **Cordy's Variety Corner** (cameras and film here), **Dinostore Digs** (dino stuff), **The Magic Shop**, and the **San Rio Boutique** (Hello Kitty and other San Rio characters).

Knott's Berry Farm: Camp Snoopy

This is where the Peanuts comic strip gang go to summer camp -- a beautifully landscaped, woody wilderness area with playhouses and rides just for kids.

Timberline Twister is Knott's smallest roller coaster, where kids who didn't meet the minimum height requirements on the other rides can enjoy seeing tall people turned away by the *Maximum* height requirement.

Huff 'n Puff uses kid-power (and sometimes a push from the attendant) to pump a small hand-car around the track. It can be fun to watch while you're in line for Montezooma's Revenge.

Many other rides for kids, some of which also accommodate their parents, include **Woodstock's Airmail** (the kid-size version of Supreme Scream), **Rocky Road Truckin' Company** (which puts kids in the driver's seat), **Log Peeler** (mini-scrambler), **High Sierra Ferris Wheel**, **Flying Ace Balloon Race**, the **Camp Bus** (a "Crazy Bus" style ride), and the **Red Baron** airplanes.

There are animals in these woods with a **Petting Zoo** and the **Smokey's Animal Friends** show.

And, of course, there are shows featuring Snoopy and the Peanuts Gang, as well as a playhouse and other activities for kids.

The Walter K. Steamboat takes passengers on a relaxing lake cruise.

Edison's Inventors Workshop, sponsored by Edison Electric, has hands on exhibits about science subjects for kids to enjoy -- and you might even meet Thomas Edison himself there, too.

Kid favorite fast foods are available at **Grizzly Creek Lodge** (home of Snoopy's Kids Meals and birthday parties) and **Cave Inn**.

Snoopy and Peanuts merchandise is available (of course) at **Snoopy's Camp Store**. The **Grand Entrance Stroller Shop**, just inside from the main entrance, is the place to rent strollers and wheelchairs. They also stock cameras, film, and sundries.

Knott's Berry Farm: California Marketplace

Located outside of the theme park, California Marketplace has shops to tempt you as you head to and from the park as well as the restaurant that started it all. Take a look at the mural on the wall of the tunnel between the parking lot and the marketplace to see what this area looked like more than sixty years ago.

Independence Hall. Walter Knott, always the American history buff and patriot, opened this brick by brick replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 1966. It's as near an exact replica as you can get -- no expense or trouble was spared to duplicate the original building as it stood in 1776 (except there's a theater upstairs instead of individual rooms). There's even a 2,075 pound replica of The Liberty Bell duplicated right down to the crack.

A multi-track audio presentation in the Assembly Chamber puts the visitor right in the middle of the debates over the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Independence Hall is located beside the main parking lot, across the street from the theme park and marketplace. Admission to the hall is free, hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. There is a small historical gift shop inside.

Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant. They're still serving the chicken that made Mrs. Knott famous -- thousands of times a day. You've got to try the fried chicken, homemade biscuits, and (oh, yeah) the boysenberry pie. Other entrees are available, but you won't know what you're missing. They serve a great breakfast, too. They usually open at 7 a.m. (you can grab breakfast before the park opens), closing times vary seasonally. Closed Christmas Day.

They've also got **Chicken To Go**, also pies to go at the **Knott's Farm Bakery**, and burgers, bagels, ice cream, and other snacks are served at other restaurants and stands in the Marketplace.

Top shops include:

- **Virginia's Gift Shop** for gifts, collectables, and figurines. It all started back in 1939, when Virginia Knott set up a small souvineer table in her mother's restaurant.
- **Berry Market** has Knott's Berry Farm's signature jams and jellies and other gourmet foods and gifts.
- **Bob's Mens Shop**, when you want menswear a little more upscale than a Ghost Rider t-shirt.
- **Candy Parlour** has a variety of candies and treats.
- **Grand Avenue Mercantile** for leather goods.
- **MarketPlace Emporium** has a year-round Christmas store and other collectables.
- **Snoopy's Boutique** for everything Peanuts related.